

Weekly Compilation of  
**Presidential  
Documents**



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## Contents

### Addresses and Remarks

- California
  - Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee in San Francisco—326, 330
  - Roundtable discussion in Oakland—339
  - Technology '98 Conference in San Francisco—336
- Democratic Governors' Association dinner—312
- Florida, touring tornado damage in Kissimmee—324
- National Council of Jewish Women—316
- National Governors' Association—305
- Radio address—303
- U.N. Secretary-General Annan's mission to Iraq—307

### Communications to Congress

- Campaign finance reform legislation, letter—303
- Chemical and biological weapons defense, letter transmitting report—324
- Corporation for Public Broadcasting, message transmitting report—336
- Cuba, message transmitting notice—336
- Loan guarantees to Israel program, message transmitting report—325
- Ordering the selected Reserve of the Armed Forces to active duty, message transmitting Executive order—323

### Communications to Federal Agencies

- Certification for major illicit drug producing and drug transit countries, memorandum—343
- Helping schools end social promotions, memorandum—310
- Federal Communications Commission, letter to Chairman—344
- Federal Election Commission, letter—345

### Executive Orders

- Ordering the Selected Reserve of the Armed Forces to Active Duty—323
- Special Oversight Board for Department of Defense Investigations of Gulf War Chemical and Biological Incidents—315

### Interviews With the News Media

- Exchange with reporters in the Oval Office—307

### Notices

- Continuation of the National Emergency Relating to Cuba and of the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Vessels—335

### Proclamations

- American Red Cross Month—345
- Irish-American Heritage Month—346
- Save Your Vision Week—343

(Continued on the inside of the back cover.)

**Editor's Note:** The President was in Salt Lake City, UT, on February 27, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

## WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

## PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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## Contents—Continued

### **Statements by the President**

- Campaign finance reform legislation—323,  
342
- Child care legislation, proposed—343
- Supreme Court decision not to review New  
Jersey's "Megan's Law"—304
- Violence Against Women program, grants—  
344

### **Supplementary Materials**

- Acts approved by the President—349
- Checklist of White House press releases—348
- Digest of other White House  
announcements—347
- Nominations submitted to the Senate—348

Week Ending Friday, February 27, 1998

**Letter to Members of the Senate on  
Campaign Finance Reform  
Legislation**

*February 20, 1998*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Next week, the Senate is scheduled to debate campaign finance legislation. You will have an important opportunity to cast a vote for real reform of our electoral process. Today, I am writing to urge you to support legislation that will make our democracy work better for all Americans.

The campaign finance laws were last rewritten twenty-three years ago. Those laws have served us well, but they have been overwhelmed by a flood of money and the rising cost of campaigns. Politicians have talked about reform for years. Now it is time to act. The McCain-Feingold bill puts an end to the soft money system, expands disclosure requirements, increases penalties for election law violations, and strengthens the rules for so-called independent campaign expenditures. Make no mistake: a vote against McCain-Feingold is a vote for soft money, for unlimited backdoor campaign expenditures, for the status quo.

For these reasons, I have supported and will continue to support the McCain-Feingold Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act and I urge the Senate to pass it. I also urge the Senate to reject any attempts to attach an amendment that would make this bill unpalatable to one party or another. Such an attempt is nothing less than an effort to defeat campaign finance reform.

A critical mass has been reached for campaign finance reform. Citizen groups, spurred by business executives and civic leaders, have gathered one million signatures on a petition to Congress calling for reform. Presidents Ford, Carter, and Bush have been joined by dozens of former lawmakers in calling for reform.

Today the responsibility rests in the hands of the Senate. If you want to strengthen our democracy, vote for the McCain-Feingold Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act.

Sincerely,

**Bill Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to all Members of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 21.

**The President's Radio Address**

*February 21, 1998*

Good morning. February is Black History Month, the time when we celebrate the rich heritage of the African-American community and rededicate ourselves to the value of equal opportunity for all Americans that is at the heart of the American ideal. Today I want to talk about an important step we're taking to make sure all Americans, no matter what their background, have a better opportunity to live healthier lives.

In the last 6 years, we've worked hard to make quality health care more accessible and affordable and to place more emphasis on prevention. And this approach is working. Since 1993, our Nation's health has greatly improved. Infant mortality has reached an all-time low, childhood immunization levels are at an all-time high, and AIDS death rates are falling for the first time in the history of the epidemic. Americans are living longer and are in better health than ever before.

This is good news we should all celebrate. But we must not be blind to the alarming fact that too many Americans do not share in the fruits of our progress, and nowhere are the divisions of race and ethnicity more sharply drawn than in the health of our people.

Consider: Infant mortality rates are twice as high for African-Americans as for white Americans; African-American men suffer from heart disease at nearly twice the rate

of whites; African-Americans are more likely to die from breast cancer and prostate cancer. Overall, cancer fatalities are disproportionately high among both Latinos and blacks. Vietnamese women are 5 times as likely to have cervical cancer; Chinese-Americans, 4 to 5 times as likely to have liver cancer. Hepatitis B is much more prominent among Asian-Americans than the rest of the populations. Native Americans suffer higher rates of infant mortality and heart disease. And for diabetes, Hispanic rates are twice the national average, and Native American rates, 3 times the national average.

Research shows that, overall, all these groups are less likely to be immunized against disease, less likely to be routinely tested for cancer, less likely to get regular check-ups. We do not know all the reasons for these disturbing gaps. Perhaps inadequate education, disproportionate poverty, discrimination in the delivery of health services, cultural differences are all contributing factors. But we do know this: No matter what the reason, racial and ethnic disparities in health are unacceptable in a country that values equality and equal opportunity for all. And that is why we must act now with a comprehensive initiative that focuses on health care and prevention for racial and ethnic minorities.

This is our national goal: By the year 2010, we must eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in infant mortality, diabetes, cancer screening and management, heart disease, AIDS, and immunization.

My balanced budget plan devotes an unprecedented \$400 million to spur promising prevention and outreach programs to help us meet this challenge. I'm asking our top public health officials, led by Secretary Donna Shalala, to convene a task force to find new ways of targeting existing Federal programs to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. Our new Surgeon General, Dr. David Satcher, will launch a comprehensive campaign to educate the public and work with community leaders and health professionals to reach more Americans.

These steps, along with our drive to give 5 million more children, many of them minorities, health insurance, and our huge increase in overall medical research, will bring

us closer to our goal. But to truly eliminate these disparities and ensure better health for all Americans, all Americans must do their part.

I'm pleased to announce that Grant-Makers in Health, a major coalition of over 136 philanthropic foundations across the country, is joining our efforts. Together, we'll host a national conference this spring to help solve this national problem, community by community.

Above all, Americans must take more responsibility for our own health and the health of our children, for good health is the greatest gift God can bestow, and it is each of our duty to protect it. America has the best health care system in the world, but we can't take full pride in that system until we know that every American has the best health care in the world. With these steps, I'm confident that we can meet the challenge and go forward as one America into the 21st century, stronger and healthier than ever before.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

### **Statement on the Supreme Court Decision Not To Review New Jersey's "Megan's Law"**

*February 21, 1998*

This morning the Supreme Court declined to review a challenge to the community notification provision of New Jersey's "Megan's Law," thus leaving intact a crucial tool to protect children from known sexual predators. Because of the importance of this law to families and communities, my administration has defended its constitutionality, enacted a similar Federal Megan's Law, and worked with States to establish a national sex offender registry. We will continue to do everything we can to make sure that community notification and sex offender registration laws are enforced and upheld throughout the country.

### **Remarks at the National Governors' Association Dinner**

*February 22, 1998*

Good evening. Governor and Mrs. Voinovich, Governor and Mrs. Carper, ladies and gentlemen, welcome again to the White House. Hillary and I always look forward to this night every year. It brings back a lot of happy memories. And I'm especially glad to have you here this year.

I want to begin by thanking you, all of you, for the contributions that you have made to the success that the United States is now enjoying. The American people have the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, the lowest crime rate in 24 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 27 years, the lowest inflation rate in 30 years. And a lot of that credit goes to you and the people with whom you work and the commitments that you have made to forge the right kind of government for this new era in which we live. A lot of you work every day at building a government that is smaller but more effective, that works as a catalyst and a partner, does actually give our people the tools they need to make the most of this remarkable time in which we're living.

I also want to say I looked at the document you prepared for your meeting; I read it this afternoon while I was thinking about a few other things, but I enjoyed it very much. And I think it shows that you agree with me that these good times, impose upon us a special obligation to make the most of them, to strengthen our country for the century ahead.

You know, this country was founded by people who came here seeking relief from the arbitrary exercise of absolute power. They thought they had a better idea. They thought that when free people were able to pursue happiness and work to form a more perfect Union, they could build a truly remarkable society. And more than 200 years later, I think we'd all have to admit that they were right.

I have said many times, but I would like to say again, that it seems to me that at every important time in our country's history we have been faithful to the basic ideas of our Founders, no matter what the challenge was. We have always improved America when we

deepen the meaning of our freedom, widen the circle of opportunity, and strengthen the bonds of our Union.

For your contributions to that, I am profoundly grateful. I hope you enjoy this evening. I look forward to tomorrow. And I'd like to ask everyone here to join me in a toast to the Governors of the 50 States and all the territories—[laughter]—and everybody else who is here.

*[At this point, a toast was offered.]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to chairman of the National Governors' Association Gov. George V. Voinovich of Ohio and his wife, Janet; and vice chairman Gov. Tom Carper of Delaware and his wife, Martha.

### **Remarks at the National Governors' Association Meeting**

*February 23, 1998*

Good morning. Governor Voinovich, Governor Carper, Mr. Scheppach, and to the members of the administration that are here, and all the Governors, let me welcome you back to the White House. Before I begin, let me say what I know is on all of our minds—our thoughts and prayers are with the people in central Florida where tornadoes have now killed 28 people. Governor Chiles is going to visit with our FEMA Director, James Lee Witt, the area today, and they will have our concerns with them.

I'd also like to say I'm sorry we're starting a little late, but I've been working on the situation in Iraq. The Vice President and I met with National Security Adviser Berger this morning. Last night, just before our dinner, I spoke with the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and I have called Prime Minister Blair this morning; we had a long talk about the situation. I still have to talk to President Yeltsin and President Chirac, and I may have to leave the meeting and then come back. But that's all I have to say now, but I'm sorry we're starting a little late.

I'd like to confine my opening remarks—and I'll try to truncate them since we're starting late—to education. For 20 years now,

Governors have been in the forefront of education reform in the United States. In the late seventies, I was working with Governor Riley and now Senator Bob Graham and Governor Hunt and others in the South who were trying to raise the standard of living in the Southern States to the national average, in part through an improvement in education.

In '83, when President Reagan was here, Secretary Bell issued the Nation at Risk report. In '89, we had the education summit—some of you were there then—which produced the national education goals. In '93, we passed Goals 2000 here and the school-to-work program—I might say both of which have been implemented without a single new Federal regulation, something I'm very proud of.

Last year, in my State of the Union, I outlined a 10-point program in education and asked that we leave politics at the schoolhouse door. And most of that program has now been implemented. I won't go over all of it, but I would just mention three or four issues that I think are important because they relate to many concerns that the Governors have.

First of all, with the increases in Pell grants and 300,000 more work-study positions, with the education IRAs finally giving interest deductions for payments on college loans, the direct loan program, the HOPE scholarship, named after Governor Miller's program in Georgia, and the lifetime learning tax credit, which also applies to the second, the third, and fourth years of college and graduate school, I think we can finally say for the first time in the history of the country, we've opened the doors of college to all Americans. And that's an astonishing achievement for America. And I'm very proud of that. Secondly, we are well on our way to hooking up all the classrooms and libraries in the country to the Internet by the year 2000. And many of you have been very active in that. Thirdly—I'll say a little more about this in a minute—the national standards movement is alive and well. Fourth, we had the America Reads program, which has several thousand college students in all your States going into elementary school classrooms to teach kids to read. And finally, we funded a huge expansion

in the master teacher program, which Governor Hunt has been so active in, and which I think is critically important to the future of education. If we can get a master teacher, a certified master teacher, in every school building in America, it will change the culture and content and results of American education.

Now, in '98, in the State of the Union Address, I asked the American people to focus on the fact that we could be happy that we'd opened the doors of college to everybody, because everyone accepts the fact that we have the best system of higher education in the world—everyone accepts that. No one believes America has the best system of elementary and secondary education in the world. And it seems incongruous. We know that we can have, and I think that should be our goal.

So with a view towards standards, accountability, and expectations all being lifted, our budget in this year makes the largest commitment to K through 12 education in the history of the country—focused largely on reducing class size in the early grades to an average of 18—there are still a lot of classes with 30 kids or more in them—on—therefore, to do that, achieving—helping the States and helping local school districts to hire 100,000 teachers, and helping to build or remodel 5,000 schools.

It focuses on more emphasis on teachers, money for teacher training, and more money to develop a master teacher program. It focuses on standards and the continuation of the voluntary national test development for eighth grade math and fourth grade reading.

I know that later today—and all of you may or may not know this—but I know later today Secretary Riley is going to appoint Governor Engler to the NAGB, the independent board that is supposed to develop a test and that guarantees that the States' concerns will be taken into account. I thank Governor Engler for his willingness to serve. I think it is important that we say whether we use national tests that are somehow evaluated by a national standard, or State tests that are evaluated by a national standard, that we do believe that learning the basics is the same in every State in America, and we want to raise the standards in every State in America. I think that

is terribly important and I think we can do it. And I thank you, Governor, for your willingness to serve.

One other thing I'd like to say about standards. There's an interesting effort underway in America in many States, and in some cities like Chicago, to find a way to end the practice of social promotion in a way that lifts children up instead of putting them down. In Chicago, they have mandatory summer school, for example, for children that don't perform at grade level. And it's, among other things, led to a dramatic drop in juvenile crime in the summer in Chicago, that more and more people are involved in constructive activities.

Before the next school year starts, Secretary Riley will issue guidelines on how schools can end social promotion and boost their efforts to ensure that more students learn what they need to learn the first time around, and then to help those who don't with extra tutoring and summer school.

I also will send to Congress this year legislation to expand the Ed-Flex program. That's the program that frees the States from Federal regulations so long as they set high academic standards, waive their own regulations for local schools, and hold schools accountable for results. There are, I think, a dozen of you now who are part of the Ed-Flex program. The legislation that I will send would make every State in the country eligible to be a part of it, which would dramatically reduce the regulatory burden of the Federal Government on the States in the area of education.

One last thing I'd like to mention, as all of you know, we have been involved now for about 8 months in a national conversation on race. This race initiative, I think, has produced a number of results both in terms of specific programs and in terms of elevating the dialog in the country about how we can deal with our increasing diversity as one America in the 21st century. I'm delighted that this initiative is also working with the YWCA and with Governors to convene statewide days of dialog on race on April 30th. And I want to thank the YWCA—the CEO, Dr. Prema Mathai-Davis, is here today with us this morning—for helping us to launch these dialogs.

Several of the Governors have already agreed to participate in this, and I hope all the Governors will support the days of dialog. Judith Winston, who is the Executive Director of my initiative on race, is also here today and will be happy to talk with you or your representatives more about this effort.

Now, there are a lot of other issues that I know that you want to talk about, but I'll just end where I tried to begin. I think if we get education right, the rest of this will all resolve itself. As I look at where we are with the unemployment rate in the country, with the growth rate, and I ask myself how can we continue to grow, how we can lower the unemployment rate, how can we do it without inflation, the only answer, it seems to me, is to provide higher skill levels to the people in the places that have not yet fully participated in the good times America is enjoying.

I think it is a democratic obligation on us—small “d”—to make our democracy work, and I think it is an economic imperative. So I hope that we can focus on that, but I'm more than eager to talk about whatever else you'd like to discuss.

Governor.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:04 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Raymond C. Scheppach, executive director, National Governors' Association; Gov. Lawton Chiles of Florida; United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; President Boris Yeltsin of Russia; President Jacques Chirac of France; former President Ronald Reagan; former Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell; Gov. Zell Miller of Georgia; Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina; and Gov. John Engler of Michigan. The President also referred to the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB).

### **Remarks on United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Mission to Iraq and an Exchange With Reporters**

*February 23, 1998*

**The President.** Good afternoon. Let me say first that I welcome U.N. Secretary-General Annan's mission to Baghdad. I thank him and his team for their hard work on behalf



of the international community. I also want to commend each and every one of our men and women in uniform and our coalition partners for their steadfastness. Once again, we have seen that diplomacy must be backed by strength and resolve.

The Government of Iraq has made a written commitment to provide immediate, unrestricted, unconditional access for the UNSCOM weapons inspectors to all suspect sites in Iraq, as called for by the United Nations Security Council resolutions. If fully implemented—and that is the big “if”—this commitment will allow UNSCOM to fulfill its mission: first, to find and destroy all of Iraq’s chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons; second, to find and destroy the missiles to deliver those weapons; and third, to institute a system for long-term monitoring to make sure Iraq does not build more.

The Secretary-General has made clear that Iraq’s commitment applies to all sites anywhere in the country, including eight so-called presidential sites, which are among the areas to which the weapons inspectors had previously been denied access.

Senior diplomats appointed by the Secretary-General will accompany the UNSCOM experts as they inspect these sites, with repeat visits and no deadlines to complete their work. And Iraq has committed that all other areas, facilities, equipment, records, and means of transportation shall be open to UNSCOM under existing procedures. Again, this includes sites that were previously closed.

There are issues that still need to be clarified to our satisfaction and details that need to be spelled out. We will hear from the Secretary-General tomorrow on these questions, and we will work with him and with UNSCOM to make sure the inspections are rigorous and professional. What really matters is Iraq’s compliance, not its stated commitments; not what Iraq says, but what it does. In the days and weeks ahead, UNSCOM must test and verify.

After two crises in the last 4 months, Iraq’s failure to allow UNSCOM to do its job would be a serious, serious matter. If Iraq fails to comply this time to provide immediate, unrestricted, unconditional access to the weapons

inspectors, there will be serious consequences.

I have ordered our military to remain in the Persian Gulf. Our soldiers, our ships, our planes will stay there in force until we are satisfied that Iran is complying—Iraq is complying with its commitments.

If the inspectors are allowed to inspect where and when they want, then they are the most effective tool we have to monitor Iraq’s compliance with the commitment it made at the end of the Gulf war to give up all of its biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons, the missiles to deliver them, and the capacity to rebuild its arsenal.

I hope today’s agreement will prove to be the step forward we have been looking for. But the proof is in the testing. The United States remains resolved and ready to secure, by whatever means necessary, Iraq’s full compliance with its commitment to destroy its weapons of mass destruction.

Thank you.

**Q.** Mr. President, what makes you think that you will be—you won’t be in this position a year from now, 2 years from now, 3 years from now? What in the preliminary details makes you comfortable, or at least somewhat comfortable at this stage?

**The President.** Well, I’ve already said I don’t know whether we’ll be in a position of breach by Iraq within a year. All I said is that I think it is now clear, based on my conversations with Prime Minister Blair, President Chirac, President Yeltsin, and what we in our own team believe, no one seriously believes that there can be a breach of this agreement by Iraq without serious consequences.

But I will say, this is the first time—at least since 1991—that Iraq has made a commitment to unconditional, open, unfettered access to all the sites, not only these presidential sites there’s been so much talk about but also some other so-called sensitive sites that have been off limits.

So if the inspection system is allowed to go forward—we know from the record that the UNSCOM inspectors have compiled in the last 7 years that the system works. And if we can find a peaceful means for the system to work to secure the safety of the people

in the region, the neighbors of Iraq and others that might be menaced in the future by its weapons of mass destruction, that is what we have been seeking.

**Q.** Mr. President, if Iraq does not keep its word this time, do we go through this exercise of weeks and weeks and weeks again?

**The President.** I believe if it does not keep its word this time, everyone would understand that then the United States and hopefully all of our allies would have the unilateral right to respond at a time, place, and manner of our own choosing. And I think that's enough for me to say about that at this time.

**Q.** Mr. President, you said before that he's lied, and he's cheated. Do you think that you can trust him this time? What's your expectation? I know that you say you're going to take a wait and see attitude.

**The President.** First of all, that is true. But I've also said before that when the UNSCOM inspectors have been allowed to do their job, even when there's been some cat-and-mouse games over there, they have succeeded beyond anyone's expectations. You just have to look at the volume of stuff they've uncovered and destroyed to know that. Therefore, this should not be a question of trust. First, we need clarity. We need to clarify some of the remaining questions about the agreement to our satisfaction. Clarity is important. And in fairness, all parties, even Saddam Hussein—all the parties are entitled to that—clarity. Then we need to test the agreement and verify that the commitments which are made in writing are kept in fact. So trust should not have to be an issue here. If you have clarity, then you can verify.

So over the next 2 days we have a very—all Americans should have a positive reaction to the fact that we finally have a commitment to open all these sites and to let the inspectors finish their job. We need clarity; we need verification; and I intend to keep our forces at high levels of preparation in the Gulf in the near-term to see what happens in terms of honoring these obligations.

Yes.

**Q.** Mr. President, Senator Lott says you lack a long-term strategy for handling Iraq. How do you respond to that, sir?

**The President.** Well, since 1991, our strategy has been to keep the sanctions on, keep Iraq from rebuilding its military might and threatening its neighbors, but to pursue this inspection system to end what is the biggest threat both to its neighbors and to others by indirection, which is the chemical, the biological, and the nuclear weapons program. That has been our strategy all along. Whether that should continue to be our strategy depends in no small measure, I believe, on whether this agreement is honored.

**Q.** Sir, is there any wiggle room—

**Q.** Has Saddam capitulated, sir?

**The President.** I'll answer both questions.

**Q.** Has Saddam Hussein capitulated?

**The President.** Well, I think he has admitted that he has to honor commitments he made back in '91. You know, I think that our tough response was essential to getting him to admit that. The Secretary-General has conducted a hard mission. I am satisfied that he has done the best he can. And I am satisfied that we would not have this commitment to open all these spots had not the United States and our allies—and there were lots of them, don't forget—been prepared to go further and to take whatever actions were necessary.

But the main thing we need to do now is to focus on clarifying the details of the agreement to our satisfaction, then going ahead and testing it and verifying the commitment. I think that is the most useful thing. What we want here is to secure the safety of the people who would be exposed to chemical and biological weapons and to whatever nuclear capacity that he might still have.

You know, the United States—I think I should point this out, it's not been part of my statement, but the United States—and Ambassador Richardson was there carrying the ball for us—we strongly supported expanding the program under Resolution 986 in the Security Council to let Iraq sell even more oil to go for food, to lift the Iraqi children above the minimum caloric requirement for all growing children in the world, to build 5,000 more schools, to put a lot more medicine into that country, to rebuild the water and sewer systems and the agriculture system. We care a lot about the people of

Iraq, and we want them to have a decent life. But we all—we must still be vigilant and steadfast about this regime.

This is—and I say again, one of you asked me this question—this is not about trusting. First, we need to be clear on what it means, and he needs to be clear on what it means. And then we need to see whether it is enforced. And if it is, fine. If it's not, then the alternative will be a clear course of action to everyone in the world.

**Q.** Is there any wiggle room in this agreement? Because even before you spoke, some of your critics predicted that you would buy an agreement that was not airtight simply as a way out.

**The President.** Well, I think it's obvious that I haven't looked for a way out here. What I have looked for is a way forward. The United States, because of our position in the world, is called upon to bring its power to bear when it's important to do so. But we also should have the self-confidence and the conscience to show forbearance as well as strength, and to do what is right.

The objective is unassailable, and he has agreed to the objective, which is full and free and unfettered access. I have told you—not my critics, I have told you—that there are details in this agreement that still have to be flushed out, and there are provisions in it which require greater clarity, and we have to have those things resolved to our satisfaction in order to go forward.

But my instinct is, talking to the Secretary-General and talking to our partners, that we can resolve those things to our satisfaction. I'm hoping that we can, but I am not prejudging it. Ambassador Richardson has got his work cut out for him tomorrow, and the rest of our team will be working closely with him. We'll see what we're doing.

**Q.** Can you give us examples of those things where maybe you need clarification that could provide a problem?

**The President.** Well, we'll do that at the proper time. The Secretary-General has asked to have the opportunity—and I think he's entitled to it—to present the memorandum of understanding to the Security Council before the rest of us comment on the details. And I think that he is entitled to that. He's worked very hard; he's had very little

sleep in the last several days. And I'm going to honor his request to that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:42 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; President Jacques Chirac of France; and President Boris Yeltsin of Russia. The President also referred to the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM).

## **Memorandum on Helping Schools End Social Promotions**

*February 23, 1998*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of Education*

*Subject: Helping Schools End Social Promotions*

The linchpin of our efforts to strengthen public education has been to raise standards and expectations for all students. As a result of State and local efforts, and with the support of Goals 2000 and other Federal education programs, students in every State in the country are beginning to benefit from higher academic standards and a more challenging curriculum.

If our efforts to promote higher standards are to lead to increased student achievement, the standards must count. Students must be required to meet them, and schools must provide each student with adequate preparation.

At present, too often standards don't count. Students are passed from grade to grade often regardless of whether they have mastered required material and are academically prepared to do the work at the next level. It's called "social promotion." For many students, the ultimate consequence is that they fall further and further behind, and leave school ill equipped for college and without the skills needed for employment. This is unacceptable for students, teachers, employers, and taxpayers.

That is why I have repeatedly challenged States and school districts to end social promotions—to require students to meet rigorous academic standards at key transition points in their schooling career, and to end the practice of promoting students without

regard to how much they have learned. As every parent knows, students must earn their promotion through effort and achievement, not simply by accumulating time in school.

This is especially important in the early grades, where students must acquire a firm foundation in reading in order to learn other subjects in later grade levels. Students should not be promoted past the fourth grade if they cannot read independently and well, and should not enter high school without a solid foundation in math. They should get the help they need to meet the standards before moving on.

Neither promoting students when they are unprepared nor simply retaining them in the same grade is the right response to low student achievement. Both approaches presume high rates of initial failure are inevitable and acceptable. Ending social promotions by simply holding more students back is the wrong choice. Students who are required to repeat a year are more likely to eventually drop out, and rarely catch up academically with their peers. The right way is to ensure that more students are prepared to meet challenging academic standards in the first place.

Schools must implement those proven practices that will prepare students to meet rigorous standards the first time. Schools must provide smaller classes, especially for the most disadvantaged students. They must be staffed with well-prepared teachers. Schools should use specific grade-by-grade standards and a challenging curriculum aligned with those standards. They must identify those students who need extra help early on, and provide it immediately. There must be after school and summer school programs for students who need them. The entire school staff must be accountable for results, and must work together as a team to achieve them for every child.

If steps such as these are taken in every school as part of an overall effort to require students to meet academic standards, we would see a dramatic rise in student achievement and a decline in student retention rates. My Administration must help States, school districts, and schools take these steps.

A growing number of States and school districts is responding to the challenge of ending social promotion. A recent study by

the American Federation of Teachers shows that seven States now require school districts and schools to use State standards and assessments to determine if students can be promoted at key grades. We must encourage more States to take this step.

Chicago has also ended social promotions, and instituted a program that provides after school programs for students who need extra help and mandatory summer school for students who do not meet promotion standards. In Cincinnati, student promotion is now based on specific standards that define what students must know and be able to do. The standards are designed to prepare students to pass the State's ninth-grade proficiency test. My Administration's proposal to establish Education Opportunity Zones in high poverty urban and rural communities will help more local school systems take these and related steps to help students meet challenging standards.

As more States and localities move to end social promotions, we must help them design and implement approaches that will succeed. Therefore, I am directing you to take the following actions within 6 months:

1. *Produce and Widely Disseminate Guidelines for Educators and Policymakers on Effective Approaches to Ending Social Promotions.* Drawing on the lessons from research and practice, these guidelines should provide educators and policymakers with practical advice on how to design and implement policies that require students to meet academic standards at key transition points before being promoted. The guidelines should help schools:

- implement strategies that will prepare all students to meet the standards on time;
- end the use of remedial strategies that have been shown to be ineffective;
- provide students who do not meet the standards with immediate and effective extra help—such as after school tutoring programs and summer school—so they can be promoted on time;
- implement effective interventions for students who must be retained; and
- make appropriate use of tests and other indicators of academic performance in

determining whether students should be promoted.

2. *Help States and School Districts Use Federal Education Resources to Implement Effective Practices.* The Department of Education should develop a plan to inform States, school districts, and schools how Department of Education programs and resources, such as Title 1, Goals 2000, the 21st Century Schools Program, the Comprehensive School Reform Program, and others, can be used to implement the recommendations in the guidelines described above.

Together, these initiatives can help ensure that our students receive a solid foundation in the basic skills of reading and math, and master advanced subject matters as well. They can help improve the quality of teaching and learning in our schools, and ensure that students who need extra help get it without delay. They can help strengthen our public schools by raising standards, raising expectations, and restoring accountability.

**William J. Clinton**

### **Remarks at the Democratic Governors' Association Dinner**

*February 23, 1998*

Thank you very much for that wonderful, wonderful welcome. Thank you, Governor Rossello, for your remarks and your leadership. It's good to see you and Maga here. And let me say it's a great tribute to you and to Governor O'Bannon and Judy O'Bannon and the other Governors here that this is the most successful DGA fundraiser in history. Thank you, and thank Katie Whelan and all the staff. You did a wonderful job tonight.

I'm delighted to be here with all the Governors and a lot of former Governors who came back to see me. We all had our pictures taken together—ex-Governors. And I began to think about the “ex” thing. *[Laughter]* I don't know how many of you saw the wonderful movie, “Amistad,” but it's a fabulous movie. But I went to the Washington premier, and I was sitting back in the audience and Anthony Hopkins, who is a magnificent actor, was portraying John Quincy Adams, who after he left the White House, served 8 terms in the Congress, and made the argu-

ment before the Supreme Court in behalf of the people who were turned into slaves on the ship and brought over here. But when he was preparing—there's a great line in the movie where John Quincy Adams says of himself—he said, “There is nothing in life more pathetic than a former President.” *[Laughter]* So I got to thinking, I hope that's not true. *[Laughter]*

I like being a former Governor. I was the chairman of this group in 1980—18 years ago. I'm the only person who ever served as chairman of this group who was not yet old enough to vote. *[Laughter]* And that's because Jim Hunt made me do it. *[Laughter]*.

But for nearly 20 years now, I have followed the fortunes of the Democratic Governors. And I want to try to emphasize tonight one of the points that Governor Rossello made about the importance of the '98 elections and why it matters what the party affiliation—but more importantly, what the philosophy, the values, the direction of the Governors is and will be as we move quickly into a new century.

I'd like to begin with a kind of a representative issue that is rather unique in American public life, the issue that Governor Rossello's whole career embodies—that of Puerto Rico. This is the centennial year of Puerto Rico's affiliation with the United States. And I think that it is time that we responded to the aspirations of the 4 million U.S. citizens who live there and allow them to determine their ultimate political status.

The people in Puerto Rico have local self-government, but they do not have votes that are fully votes in their National Government. My colleague, when I was a Governor, was Carlos Romero-Barceló, who now represents Puerto Rico in the Congress, and he does a great job. I'm glad to see him back there.

I have always said that the people of Puerto Rico should decide for themselves, and Congress ought to give them a chance to do that, what they want their relationship to the United States to be. There is now a bipartisan bill making its way through the Congress to establish a process for resolving this issue that gives Puerto Ricans the powers to vote on the long-discussed options of statehood, commonwealth, or national sovereignty,

independent or linked with the United States.

Some people question the option of statehood because of the Hispanic culture of Puerto Rico. And with all respect, I disagree with them. After all, this is an issue for the 21st century for America.

Consider the history: We have made Puerto Ricans citizens. We have drafted them into the Armed Forces. We extend most laws to them, especially those that are convenient to us—the rest of us. To use their culture, to bar them from voting rights or responsibilities in our country if they so choose to seek them by majority vote is wrong. And this is not primarily about Puerto Rico, but about the rest of us. What are our values? What is our culture? How can we make one America in a world and a nation ever more diverse? We have to begin by saying, “It doesn’t matter what your ethnic or racial or religious heritage is; it matters only if you embrace the ideas of the Founders as embodied in the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights.

I say that because I think tonight I want to bring you back to first principles. I’ve spent a lot of time over the last—well, going back to at least to 1984 trying to modernize the Democratic Party, trying to get rid of all the things that people used to be able to say about us that would keep us from winning the White House, that would keep us in an almost defensive position constantly in the national political debate. I have constantly argued that we had to go beyond the debate that paralyzed Washington in the 1980’s between those who said Government was the problem and those who said Government was the solution, to embrace nationally a philosophy that was embedded in the work of every Democratic Governor I ever worked with, going back to the 1970’s—the belief that Government ought to be no bigger than necessary, ought to be as little inefficiency, and ought to be as little bureaucracy in the Government as possible, but that Government should be progressive, should be committed to being a good partner, should be a catalyst for new ideas at work and, most important of all, should be absolutely unequivocally committed to giving people the tools they need to make the most of their

own lives and to making sure everyone had a fair chance at their version of the American dream.

So I spent a lot of time on that, and I think there’s a lot of evidence that it works. The Government is the smallest it’s been since President Kennedy was here, but we have done more to open the doors of college to all Americans, for example, than ever before. We are making the biggest investment in child health in a generation, as Governor Rossello said. My present balanced budget has the largest effort to improve kindergarten through 12th grade education in the history of the Republic. So I spent a lot of time talking about how we have modernized our party and how there is a third way that broke the logjam of the 1980’s. But what I want to say to you tonight is the most important thing in all modernizing our party did was to give us a way of being true to the oldest ideals of both our party and our Nation.

Who came here and why in the beginning? A bunch of folks came here who had suffered all kinds of persecution, political persecution, religious persecution. And what did they want to do? They wanted to be rid of the arbitrary, abusive exercise of unlimited power by people in Government. Why? Because they thought free people, who could direct the Government instead of being directed by it, could do a good job of first, protecting liberty; second—go back and read it at the beginning—pursuing happiness; and third, forming a more perfect Union.

And I would argue to you that at every important time in the history of this country, our country’s greatness has depended upon our willingness to reaffirm those three missions. We had to deepen the meaning of our freedom, widen the circle of opportunity, and strengthen the bonds of our Union.

Now, the Democratic Party may not have always been right. But in the 20th century, from Woodrow Wilson through Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter to the present day, I don’t think you have any doubt which party was more constantly standing up for always, always deepening the freedom of the American dream and broadening it to more people, and expanding the circle of American opportunity, and trying to

hold this Union together and make it stronger and stronger instead of letting it be thrown apart. I don't think you have any doubt.

So I say to you tonight, if we're going to strengthen this country for the 21st century, we at the national level have to create an economy based on opportunity for all. That means we have to bring the light of free enterprise to the neighborhoods and the urban areas and the rural areas that haven't felt it yet. It means we have to give our country the best system of K through 12 education in the world for everybody, not just a few. It means we have to do a lot more to continue to grow the economy.

Now, if we already have 4.7 percent unemployment—the lowest in 24 years—the lowest inflation rate in 30 years, the highest homeownership in history, which party is most likely to finish America's mission? And you know as well as I do, those of you who are Governors or who work for Governors or who have been Governors, a great deal of the remaining work of building this economy has to be done community by community, State by State.

If we want, as I said in the State of the Union, a society based on responsibility—what does that mean? It means people ought to be able to have health care if they're good, responsible citizens and they're willing to do what they can for it. We ought to let people who are over 55, who have been cast aside by their employers, buy into the Medicare system and not be bereft for 10 years when they're very vulnerable. We ought to pass the health care Patient's Bill of Rights. We ought to do more to make child care safer and more affordable and more accessible. We ought to do more not only to protect our streets from juvenile crime but to open our schools between the time the learning in the classroom is over and the parents get home, so we give kids something positive to do and keep them out of trouble in the first place. These are the missions of building a society based on responsibility.

Now, I can do some things with the Congress to achieve those goals. But how all these programs are implemented along with welfare reform—will welfare reform be a way of empowering people to move from welfare to work so that people can succeed at work

and succeed as parents and take care of their children, or will it be just a back-handed way to save money?

Now, there are a lot of Governors in the other party who have done some things I agree with. But, on balance, who do you think is more likely to build a society based on opportunity, that tries to lift everybody up and give everybody a chance and rescue the kids that have been left behind and build strong families and strong communities? I think you know the answer to that. And I think you're proud to be here tonight, just like I am, because of the answer to that question.

If we want to build a nation that lives by community—what does that mean? It means we have to continue to improve the environment even as we grow the economy—cleaner water, cleaner air, safer food, fewer toxic waste dumps. It means we have to meet our challenge of doing our part on the issue of global warming. And it means we have to do it in a way that uses technology and common sense and creativity to continue to create jobs and grow the economy as we improve the environment. Now, which party is more likely to do that?

If we want to be one community, we have to be willing to reach across the divides of America. Look at the last 20 years. Which party has tried to win elections by bringing people together, and which has tried to win elections by driving a wedge through the heart of the American electorate? I'm proud to be here tonight with all of you, and I think you know the answer to that question.

So, as I have said many times, I want to say one more time, we have to give it to our friends in the Republican Party. From the time Abraham Lincoln was elected until the time Teddy Roosevelt left office, if we are honest, we will say they did a better job than we did of standing for deeper freedom, wider opportunity, and a stronger Union. Those were not our best years. But from the time of Woodrow Wilson to the present day and toward the 21st century, we may not have always been right, but we were always on the right side.

And so, I ask you to think about that. I'm proud of the fact that our administration has done more than my two predecessors of the

Republican Party in giving more power to the States. I'm proud of the fact that we have waived more Federal rules in more areas in 5 years than they did in 12 years. I'm proud of all that because I trust—[*applause*—I trust the concept of the States as laboratories of democracy. But the more responsibilities the Governors get, the more it matters who the Governor is.

And I want you to think about that. And when you go home tonight, I want you to ask yourself if you agree with my definition of what it means to be an American and to meet our challenges and to do the right thing at every moment of challenge and change. This is a big change time. This is huge.

You know, the other night after the State of the Union Address, our Web page had 400,000 hits on the Internet. One Web page. And, of course, there are millions upon millions of Web pages. You know how many places there were on the Web when I was elected President? Fifty—50—5 years ago. And they all belonged to physicists. [*Laughter*] So if you could have gotten in, most of you would have been like me and you wouldn't have understood it. [*Laughter*] That is just a metaphor for how the world is changing. Knowledge, the whole volume of knowledge, doubling every 5 years.

Hillary came up with this idea that we should honor the end of our service here after 2 terms with a gift to the millennium entitled "Remembering the Past and Imagining the Future." We want to save Old Glory and the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, those four things—and get communities all over America to do the same. And we want to have the biggest investment in the future in medical and other research in the history of America to look toward the future.

But in the end, all this newfangled stuff and all this change will only work to make us a happier, healthier, stronger people if we end where we started. That great line from T.S. Eliot, "the end is in our beginning"—we have to end where we started. You be proud when you leave here tonight, because you belong to a party that is fighting to expand and deepen the meaning of freedom and to widen the circle of opportunity and to make this a stronger United States of

America. I'm proud, and I'm proud of you for being here.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:07 p.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Democratic Governors' Association chairman Gov. Pedro Rossello of Puerto Rico and his wife, Maga; vice chairman Gov. Frank O'Bannon of Indiana and his wife, Judy; and executive director Katie Whelan.

### **Executive Order 13075—Special Oversight Board for Department of Defense Investigations of Gulf War Chemical and Biological Incidents**

*February 19, 1998*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.), it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1. Establishment.** (a) There is hereby established the Special Oversight Board for Department of Defense Investigations of Gulf War Chemical and Biological Incidents ("Special Oversight Board"). The Special Oversight Board shall be composed of not more than seven members appointed by the President. The members of the Special Oversight Board shall have expertise relevant to the functions of the Special Oversight Board and shall not be full-time officials or employees of the executive branch of the Federal Government.

(b) The President shall designate a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson from among the members of the Special Oversight Board.

**Sec. 2. Functions.** (a) The Special Oversight Board shall report to the President through the Secretary of Defense.

(b) The Special Oversight Board shall provide advice and recommendations based on its review of Department of Defense investigations into possible detections of, and exposures to, chemical or biological weapons agents and environmental and other factors that may have contributed to Gulf War illnesses.

(c) It shall not be a function of the Special Oversight Board to conduct scientific research.



(d) It shall not be a function of the Special Oversight Board to provide advice or recommendations on any legal liability of the Federal Government for any claims or potential claims against the Federal Government.

(e) The Special Oversight Board shall submit an interim report within 9 months of its first meeting and a final report within 18 months of its first meeting, unless otherwise directed by the President.

**Sec. 3. Administration.** (a) The heads of executive departments and agencies shall, to the extent permitted by law, provide the Special Oversight Board with such information as it may require for purposes of carrying out its functions.

(b) Special Oversight Board members may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, to the extent permitted by law for persons serving intermittently in the Government service (5 U.S.C. 5701–5707). The administrative staff for the Special Oversight Board shall be compensated in accordance with Federal law.

(c) To the extent permitted by law, and subject to the availability of appropriations, the Department of Defense shall provide the Special Oversight Board with such funds as may be necessary for the performance of its functions.

**Sec. 4. General Provisions.** (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other Executive order, the functions of the President under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended, that are applicable to the Special Oversight Board, except that of reporting annually to the Congress, shall be performed by the Secretary of Defense, in accordance with the guidelines and procedures established by the Administrator of General Services.

(b) The Special Oversight Board shall terminate 30 days after submitting its final report.

(c) This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and it is not intended, and shall not be construed, to create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party

against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
February 19, 1998.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 23, 1998]

NOTE: This Executive order was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 24, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on February 24.

### **Remarks to the National Council of Jewish Women**

*February 24, 1998*

**The President.** Thank you very much. Nan did such a good job I could resort to that old parliamentary device—I can say I associate myself with the previous speaker's remarks and sit down. [*Laughter*]

I thank all of you for making me feel welcome. I'm delighted to be here with a number of members of our administration today, including my Director of Communications, Ann Lewis; my Director of Public Liaison, Maria Echaveste, and her aide, Debbie Mohile, and Lynn Cutler, who is known to many of you I know; and our HHS Assistant Secretary for Children and Families, Oliva Golden. I thank all of them for coming with me.

This has been a very busy week in Washington, and I think that there are a couple of issues I ought to make a remark or two about before I begin what I came here to visit with you about. First, let me say a few words about Iraq. As you know, yesterday the Government of Iraq agreed to give the United Nations inspectors immediate, unrestricted, and unconditional access to any site they suspect may be hiding weapons of mass destruction or the means to make or deliver them. If fully implemented, this means that, finally, and for the first time in 7 years, all of Iraq will be open to U.N. inspections, including many sites previously declared off limits. This would be an important step forward.

I'm proud of all of our men and women in uniform in the Gulf. Once again we have seen that diplomacy backed by resolve and strength can have positive results for humanity. We have to be watching very closely now to see not just what Iraq says, but what it does; not just the stated commitments, but the actual compliance. Let there be no doubt, we must remain committed to see that Saddam Hussein does not menace the world with weapons of mass destruction.

I think that there has been a lot of talk, pro and con, about this issue in the last several days. I would just tell you that I think that many of you are in a position to launch an effort to educate all the people of our country about the potential future dangers of chemical and biological warfare—how such weapons can be made, how they can be delivered, how easy it is to disseminate them to irresponsible groups in small quantities that do large amounts of damage. And because you are in a position to know that, and because all of you have friends, many family members in Israel that feel vulnerable to such things, and because you understand that every civilized community in the world could be exposed to them in the 21st century, I ask you as citizens just to share what you know with your friends and neighbors back home so that we can continue as a nation to remain vigilant on this issue wherever we have to stand against it. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

I'd also like to say a word about campaign finance reform, an issue of concern to many of you. We've been working on this for years now, and finally we may have a chance to actually have a vote in the Senate. During my first term, every single year, a vote on campaign finance reform was put off in the House to see what would happen in the Senate. And then the leaders of the other party always killed it with a filibuster in the Senate. Now, this year, the McCain-Feingold bill, which has—obviously, it's supported by Senator McCain, the Republican, Senator Feingold, the Democrat—every Member of the Democratic caucus has endorsed the McCain-Feingold bill which ends soft money and imposes other limits on the present system of campaign finance.

There was a difficulty with the bill which was keeping us from generating any more Republican support. Senator Snowe of Maine and Senator Jeffords of Vermont have brokered a compromise. Just before I left to come over here, I was told that all the Democrats are going to vote for that. So we're doing our best to do our part to get campaign finance reform. If a majority will back the Snowe-Jeffords compromise, then once again you will see that it is a minority keeping the country from getting it. So when you go up to the Hill today, if you can put in a plug for a meaningful campaign finance reform bill, I would appreciate it. And we need it.

I have a lot to be grateful to the National Council of Jewish Women for. Many of you have participated in White House conferences on hate crimes, on early childhood learning and the brain, on child care. You've been involved in our national initiative on race. And I'm grateful for all of that. I was talking to Hillary late last night about my impending visit here, and she reminded me that the thing that I should be most grateful for is that in 1986—I can hardly remember it, it was so long ago—*[laughter]*—Nan Rich came to Arkansas to talk to Hillary and me about the HIPPIY program. And we embraced it. We were the first State in the country—there were a lot of communities that had embraced it, but we were the first State that ever tried to go statewide with the program. It was a resounding success there, and now I believe there are 28 States which have statewide efforts for the home instruction program for preschool youngsters. It has been a wonderful thing.

And I might say I don't think I ever did anything as Governor that was more moving to me than to go to those HIPPIY graduation programs and talk to the mothers and see the kids. And so I want to say on behalf of the First Lady and myself again, thank you, Nan, and thanks to all of you for supporting that. If every child could be in that kind of program, it would do as much to strengthen families and later success of children who are otherwise at risk as anything we could do. And I want to urge you to stick with it and keep going.

These are good times for America. We have almost 15 million new jobs in the last

5 years, the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, the lowest inflation in 30 years, the lowest crime rate in 24 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 27 years, the highest homeownership in history. Today we learned some more good news. First, that in spite of the growth of the last year, the inflation rate and Consumer Price Index remained absolutely stable and very low.

So we are doing something that I was told after I got elected President we could not do. They said we could not grow consistently at 3 percent or more a year without inflation, and that is not so. We are doing that. And I'm very grateful for everybody who is involved in that.

We also learned just today that the American people are upbeat about their prospects not only in the moment but in the future. There are two major measurements of consumer confidence in America—one put out by something called—a group called the Conference Board; the other put out by the University of Michigan. In the figures that will be released today, the Conference Board Index is the highest it's been in 30 years, and the University of Michigan measurement the highest ever recorded in the confidence of the consumers in the United States of America in our prospects. And that's good, too.

But I'd like to reiterate something I said in the State of the Union. Good times are a blessing, and they should be enjoyed. But we all know in the nature of humankind and the rhythm of human affairs, no condition endures forever without interruption. And therefore, the good times impose upon us an opportunity and an obligation to prepare for the future, to create a framework within which long-term prosperity and health and well-being will be supported. That's why I said in the State of the Union that before we spend a penny—a penny—of the surplus that we estimate will materialize over the next 5 years, we should make sure we have secured Social Security in the 21st century so that the baby boom generation does not bankrupt the system.

And that is why we have to tend to the health care of our people. We have to continue the work and actually finish the job of insuring 5 million more children. I hope that Congress will pass my proposal to allow peo-

ple over 55 who, for one reason or other, have lost all their health insurance to buy into the Medicare system. We can do that without imposing any financial burdens on Medicare, and even though the premiums are fairly high, a lot of these folks have children who will help them pay the premiums and they're much, much cheaper than just one trip to the hospital. So I hope we can do that.

I hope that we will pass the Patient's Bill of Rights this year, because we have 160 million people now in managed care programs, and even others in nonmanaged care situations, who don't have the elemental rights and protections that I think everyone in the health care system should have. I hope that we will continue to move forward with environmental protection with the new clean water initiative and with the anti-global warming initiatives that I have recommended to help us deal with the problem of climate change, which a lot of you, depending on where you live, may have been experiencing over the last decade and even in this winter, if we can call it a winter.

I hope that we will continue to make this a safer world. I have asked the Congress to vote for the expansion of NATO, to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention to give us some teeth to deal with the kind of problems we've been discussing in Iraq throughout the world. And I hope that the idea that was inspired by the First Lady of a gift to the millennium that honors our past and imagines the future will find favor in Congress where we save our precious historical documents and the Star-Spangled Banner, and also devote the largest amount of money in history to medical and other research, scientific research to the future.

But if you think about what the leading indicator—you know, economists—if you ever listen to any of these talk shows where these economists are talking and they always are talking about what the leading indicators are, which means they're always trying to figure out what happened. And they're kind of like me, half the time they're guessing, and they don't want you to know it. *[Laughter]* So they talk gravely about leading indicators are if that will pave the way. But there are

some leading indicators I think that will tell us something about our future. For me, perhaps the most important leading indicator of where we'll be 10, 20, or 30 years from now is where our children are right now in terms of educational attainment. Now, that I think is clearly a leading indicator.

And I believe if we are being honest we would have to say the leading indicators are mixed. That's what an honest assessment would be. Now, we can do one of two things when we look at the bad news as well as the good news. We can say, "Well, what do you expect? America is a big, diverse country; we're the most ethnically, religiously, racially diverse democracy in the world, and besides that, there's so much difference in the incomes in America and so much difference in the neighborhoods, and what do you expect?"

We can do that, or we can do what we ought to do and just say, "Most of this is not rocket science." Way over 90 percent of the people are capable of learning 100 percent of what they need to know to function well in a modern society. And if our children don't do it, it's our fault, and we're going to do something about it. This is not rocket science, and we can do better.

Let's just look at where we are. For the last 5 years—and I'll speak more about the specifics later—but for the last 5 years, I have tried to bring to bear what I learned in 12 years as a Governor to the work of having the United States Government do what we could to help improve the educational enterprise in America—to raise standards, to promote reforms, to increase accountability, to improve teaching, to improve quality of education.

Now, let's start with a certain premise here. I think everybody in America believes, and rightly, that we are blessed with the finest system of higher education in the world. I don't think anyone in America believes that for all of our children we have the best system of education, kindergarten through 12th grade, in the world.

Therefore, it has been easier, in my judgment, to do the best things in higher education because you don't have to do so many hard things. All I tried to do in college when it came to college education was to open the

doors of college to all, because college costs were the only thing that went up more than health care costs in the 1980's, in percentage terms. So what have we done? We passed the HOPE scholarship, a \$1,500 tax credit for the first 2 years of college, a lifetime learning tax credit for the junior and senior years in graduate schools and for adults going back for job training; education IRA's, interest on students loans as tax-deductible, direct college loans that cost less money and are easier to repay, 300,000 more work-study positions, a lot more Pell grant scholarships, the biggest increase in aid to college since the GI bill. We can actually say we have opened the doors of college to any American who is willing to work for a college education. That is a very important achievement of which we can be proud.

*[At this point, a child in the audience cried.]*

**The President.** That child obviously doesn't understand that yet. *[Laughter]* But in time.

Now, when you back up from there, the going gets harder. And let me just give you one example. And I want you to ask yourselves as I go through this list what do you think caused this. Today our administration is announcing the results of the Third International Math and Science Study. And I talked about it last year and the year before. This is—the TIMSS test, it's called—the Third International Math and Science Study, are tests given in math and science to 4th, 8th, and 12th graders to a relatively large and representative sample—we believe representative sample—of students not only in our country, but throughout the world.

Now, the past TIMSS test showed that the fourth graders in America do very well; that in the eighth grade we begin to fall back to the middle. And we believe it's in no small measure because as kids go through school, children in other parts of the world begin to take harder courses than our kids do and undergo a more rigorous learning pattern. And a lot of the problems associated with the socioeconomic difficulties begin to manifest themselves.

Today we learned that by the 12th grade, our children trail far behind in math and science. Of the 21 countries measured, our

12th graders outperformed only 2. So we start near the top, we fall to the middle, and we come out at the end.

Now, let me say, first of all, there's some good news in this. The 4th graders represent the same socioeconomic diversity and indeed they are more diverse because of the changing patterns than the 12th graders. Therefore, there is something wrong with the system that we are using to teach them. I do not believe these kids cannot learn. I am tired of seeing children patronized because they happen to be poor or from different cultural backgrounds than the majority. That is not true. That is not true.

And let me tell you, just a couple of days ago—I can't remember exactly what day, the days fly by up here—but a couple of days ago I went to Baltimore, and I visited something called Living Classroom. And I walked along the waterway there in downtown, and I watched some kids rebuilding wetlands. And literally on the inland harbor they've got egrets now coming back to a wetland site. And I watched inner-city kids, many of whom had never focused on a harbor before, seen a waterway, measuring water quality, having very sophisticated conversations with me about the acidic content of the water and what caused it, and what the various sources of pollution in seawater are and what could be—what that might do to various kinds of fish and other life in the water.

I watched inner-city kids working a fairly sophisticated computer program, monitoring a sailboat race, the Whitbread Race, and monitoring the American boat they were watching as it went around Cape Horn. So I don't believe all this business about how some kids are just so burdened down with their background they just can't learn all this modern stuff; that's just not true. But it is true that too many people are not learning. And so, I recommend that we take another look at this. Now, in '97 in the State of the Union Address, I outlined a 10-point plan to help education and ask that politics stop at the schoolhouse door, and then in 1998, just a few weeks ago, I talked again about what I thought we ought to do about education. And I would like to briefly review the list of things that I think are important.

First of all, I still believe we have to start with the basics. We need smaller classes, better teaching, harder courses, higher standards. We have smaller classes, better teaching, harder courses, higher standards, greater accountability, and more reform. That's basically what I think we should be focused on. Even though we do pretty well in the fourth grade international tests, I think you know as well as I do there are still too many kids that don't get off to the start they need. And I appreciate what Nan said about the child care initiative. I ask for your support.

We have substantially increased the number of kids in Head Start. We've increased our investment in Federal child care supports by 70 percent in the last 5 years. We have doubled the earned-income tax credit, and that's lifted more and more children out of poverty. But we have to do more.

The budget that I have presented on child care would double the number of low-income children receiving Federal assistance subsidies—2 million; it would give 3 million more working families an expanded child care credit. It would actually mean that a family of four with an income of \$35,000 a year or less that had high child care costs would actually not pay any Federal income tax.

It would improve the safety and quality of child care. It would also provide scholarships for good providers to help to train them. And it recognizes that we need to do more on the educational component of child care. As we learned at the White House conference on early learning and the brain, which the First Lady put together, an enormous amount of the development of the infrastructure of learning is done in the first 3 years. So I'm proposing an early learning fund that would help to reduce child-to-staff ratios and also help to educate parents more so that we could increase the learning component of the preschool years.

I guess what I'd like to say is that I want to believe that if this plan passes, the lessons that are taught through the HIPPIY program could be taught in homes all across America and all kinds of programs. That's what I want.

One more thing I'd like to say about this, sort of about the out-of-school hours—another big part of our budget contains funds

through both the Educational Department and the Justice Department to help schools stay open after hours. An enormous percentage of the kids who get in trouble, juveniles who commit serious offenses, do so after the school day is over, but before their parents get home. Literally, if there were no juvenile offenses between like 2 to 3 in the afternoon and 6 to 7 in the evening, the juvenile crime rate would be cut by way over 50 percent. So I think it's important to give these children something to say yes to. And these after-school programs that we propose would help about a half a million children to say yes to soccer and computers, and no to drugs and crime. And I think that's a very important thing.

Now, let's talk about what I hope the Congress will do this year to help to deal with the K through 12 years and what we have to continue to build on that has been started already. First of all, we need a national commitment to reduce class size in the early grades. Our budget would enable local school districts to hire 100,000 more teachers and lower the class size to an average of 18 in the first, second, and third grades and also to modernize or rebuild 5,000 schools so there would be classrooms for that to occur in. I think that's important.

Second, we would continue the America Reads program, which now has literally tens of thousands of college students and other volunteers now going into elementary schools every week to make sure that no child gets out of the third grade without being able to read independently. That is very important.

Next, we would continue our movement toward national academic standards and voluntary national exams to measure how our children are doing according to high national standards. Last year we took the first steps toward a fourth grade reading and an eighth grade math test, and I hope that eventually we will have every State testing their children in these basics and measuring them by a common national standard, so that we can continue on up the ladder academically to deal with the courses and the measurement.

Next, I think it is very important that we support better teacher development. One of the problems is in a lot of these later years—and you have to pay the teachers well, too—

in a lot of these later years in these senior-level courses is you have a lot of schools who have to offer courses that are taught by people who did not have sufficient academic background in the math or science course at issue. And I think that is very, very important.

One of the most important developments potentially over the long run in American education in the last few years and gets almost no publicity—it's called the National Board for Professional Teacher Certification. And it basically is a national board set up to certify master teachers in a way that specialists in medicine and other professionals get certified. But the teachers are basically picked not only because of their substantive knowledge but because of their teaching ability, and they are trained. And the idea is that we will try to have a core—and there's just a few hundred of them now—a core of these teachers all across America. In my budget there's enough money to identify, train, and certify 100,000 master teachers. If you put one of these people in every school building in America, I believe it can revolutionize the culture of learning, and the quality of teaching has got to be a big part of what we're trying to do.

The next thing I'd like to do—I want to talk about two other things that I think would really help performance in the later grades. I think it's important that we encourage the school districts to end the process of social promotion, but to do it in a way that lifts kids up, not puts them down. That is, if you look at what Chicago is doing now—an example which is truly astonishing—I mean Chicago used to be known by the annual teachers' strike. We all saw a picture in the paper of the Chicago teachers' strike every year. They have adopted a policy that basically says—and it's school by school, supported by grassroots parents groups—if the children do not perform at grade level, they cannot go on. But they have mandatory summer school, which also, by the way, has done wonderful—wonders for juvenile problems.

They have mandatory summer school. So nobody just gets held back for spite or because of carelessness or callousness. There's a serious, disciplined comprehensive effort to give all the kids a chance to learn at grade

level. I think that's very important. The Secretary of Education got a directive from me this week to come up with, basically, a plan and a program to help every school district in the country adopt a similar approach, particularly those that have a significant problem.

Now, in addition to that, we are trying to pass in Congress this year some funds that will help universities comprehensively adopt schools where there are large numbers of disadvantaged children, starting in the sixth grade. So we can go to sixth and seventh graders, and not only give them college students as models and mentors but say to them in the sixth or seventh grade, look, here's the deal: If you make your grades and you take these courses and you learn these things, we'll be able to tell them now, here is the amount of college aid you can get. You will be able to go to college; this is the aid you will get; and this is what the college that is working with you is prepared to do.

Now, this has the chance, I think, to dramatically lift learning levels in inner-city schools and other isolated schools with large numbers of poor children. And it's based on a number of different programs that have been bandied around in America over the last 20 years, and especially the work of a Congressman from Philadelphia named Chaka Fattah. So I'm very excited about it. I hope you will support it.

You just think, if every troubled school in America or every school with a lot of kids who are poor in America had a college adopting it, with kids in that school from the sixth grade on from the college, and at the same time actually contracting with the children and their parents, saying, this is the amount of college aid you're going to get if you do what you're supposed to do for the next 6 years, I believe you would see these scores begin to go up dramatically. And I hope that we can get a lot of support for that.

Finally, let me say, we have to continue to support the reforms that are already underway. More school choice, more charter schools, and we have to finish the job of connecting every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000. That will enable more stories like the one I told you about Baltimore, because once you get everybody

on the Internet, we can use technology to dramatically increase the quality and quantity and sophistication of material pouring into every school in America without regard to its resources and wealth. The Federal Communications Commission is helping us with an E-rate which will save the schools a couple of billion dollars a year in hookup costs and payment for time used. So that's very, very important.

I say all these things to you again to point out that it is not inevitable that we have low scores on comparative exams, but it is a leading indicator. There's a coalition of schools in northern Illinois called the First in the World Coalition, and they take these 10 steps; they prepare for them; they work on them, and they do well with them. Now, most of the schools are in upper income neighborhoods. That's not why the kids do well. They do well because they prepare. They take hard courses, they work hard at it and they believe they're going to do well. And if we do that for every school in America, if we can give them the hard courses taught by well-qualified teachers in an environment that's supportive, and convince them that they can do well, they will do very well.

Our present levels of performance are unacceptable. They are not a good leading indicator. But we have lots of indicators that we can do what we need to do.

So I want—I ask you again; you have to really think. You clapped when I said this before—you have to think about whether you believe this. Do you believe all children can learn? The HIPPY program shows that's right. The Israeli experience of the HIPPY program shows that's right. If you believe that and if it's not happening, then there is something wrong with the systems. And it is our generation's responsibility to fix it. You cannot blame the schoolchildren. And if their parents don't have a lot of education and don't know what to do, you sure can't blame them. We have to—this is—this cannot be rocket science. There is no excuse for this. So again, I say, I am hoping and praying that we can continue to put aside partisan politics when it comes to education and continue to move forward on these things, because it's so important for our future.

If you think about it, a lot of the challenges we're facing today are not so different than they were back in 1893 when this organization was founded. Think about it, right? [Laughter] We've got a new economy. And there was a new economy in 1893. And we've got to figure out how to make it work for everybody instead of just a few people.

We are overwhelmed by a big influx of immigrants from different kinds of countries, and so were we in 1893, and we have to bring everybody into the American mainstream. We are about to enter a new century with a lot of confidence but a lot of challenges. We have to do what we've always had to do at such times as Americans. We have to make sure we deepen the meaning of our freedom; we widen the circle of opportunity; we strengthen the Union of our people.

The Talmud says every blade of grass has its angel that bends over and whispers, "Grow, grow." Our children are blades of grass. You must be the angels.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:28 a.m. in the Regency Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Nan Rich, national president, National Council of Jewish Women; the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPPY); and the First in the World Consortium.

### **Statement on Campaign Finance Reform Legislation**

*February 24, 1998*

Today, a clear, bipartisan majority of the Senate voted for campaign finance reform. Now, only the obstruction of a minority stands in the way of a law that would strengthen our democracy. The opponents of reform are seeking to block this measure with partisan, unacceptable amendments, even an amendment to block the Federal Communications Commission from providing free air time to candidates. Let's be clear: A vote for these amendments is a vote for soft money, unregulated campaign contributions, and backdoor campaign spending. And that vote would be very difficult to explain to the American people.

### **Executive Order 13076—Ordering the Selected Reserve of the Armed Forces to Active Duty**

*February 24, 1998*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including sections 121 and 12304 of title 10, United States Code, I hereby determine that it is necessary to augment the active armed forces of the United States for the effective conduct of operations in and around Southwest Asia. Further, under the stated authority, I hereby authorize the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of Transportation with respect to the Coast Guard when it is not operating as a service in the Department of the Navy, to order to active duty any units, and any individual members not assigned to a unit organized to serve as a unit, of the Selected Reserve.

This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
February 24, 1998.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 25, 1998]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on February 26.

### **Message to the Congress on Ordering the Selected Reserve of the Armed Forces to Active Duty**

*February 24, 1998*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Pursuant to title 10, United States Code, section 12304, I have authorized the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of Transportation with respect to the Coast Guard, when it is not operating as a Service within the Department of the Navy, to order to active duty Selected Reserve units and individuals not assigned to units to augment



the Active components in support of operations in and around Southwest Asia.

A copy of the Executive order implementing this action is attached.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
February 24, 1998.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders  
Transmitting the Report on  
Chemical and Biological Weapons  
Defense**

*February 24, 1998*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Attached is a report to the Congress on Chemical and Biological Weapons Defense, submitted pursuant to Condition 11(F) of the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the Senate of the United States on April 24, 1997.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Strom Thurmond, chairman, and Carl Levin, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Arlen Specter, chairman, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; Robert L. Livingston, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; and Floyd Spence, chairman, and Ike Skelton, ranking member, House Committee on National Security.

**Remarks After Touring Tornado  
Damage in Kissimmee, Florida**

*February 25, 1998*

Ladies and gentlemen, first let me say a word of thanks to all of those who have given me this tour and who have been working so

hard since Monday. I brought down here with me our FEMA Director, James Lee Witt, who's already been here; Attorney General Reno; Administrator of the EPA Carol Browner—both of them are from Florida, as I'm sure you know—and our Small Business Administrator, Aida Alvarez.

I want to thank Senator Graham and Congresswoman Brown and Representative Mica for coming down with me today, and to say that Congressman Boyd and Congresswoman Thurman also wished to come and could not because of their work requirements, but they expressed their concern and support.

I thank Governor Chiles and Lieutenant Governor MacKay, the leaders of the legislature who are here, Speaker Bronson, Minority Leader Senator Dyer, Senator Webster—I mean Senator Bronson, and—Representative Bronson and Speaker Webster.

Mayor Atkinson, thank you for making us feel at home today and for introducing us to some of your citizens and some of your winter visitors. I thank the Osceola County commissioners with whom I've met—Chairman Dunnick and others; General Harrison and the Florida National Guard; all the people who have been working on this. I had a chance to meet a number of them. I want to thank them for what they have done.

Some of you know that James Lee Witt, before he became the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, was the director of our State emergency program in Arkansas when I was Governor. Our State has the highest number of tornadoes per capita every year. But no matter how many of these I have seen over the last 20 years, I don't think anybody can fail to be moved and awestruck by the amount of damage that can be done, and the lives and the treasures that can be taken away in a matter of just a few seconds.

And I think we all acknowledge here today that what took just seconds to destroy will take weeks and months and, in some cases, maybe even years to rebuild. Some of you may have lost precious pictures, letters, service medals, other mementos of loved ones and family members that may never be able to be replaced. We know that. But it's also important for you to know that we understand that you'll be going through a period

in which you'll feel all different kinds of emotions. You may be in shock. You may feel like crying. You may feel angry. And some of the people that are supposed to help you may or may not do as good a job as they should the first time you ask for it or need it.

What I want to say today is that all over this country your fellow Americans are praying for you and pulling for you. And whatever it is within our power to do to help you return to normal lives, we will do.

I have already designated Federal assistance to 34 Florida counties affected by the tornadoes. Twelve will now be able to receive aid to restore public facilities and infrastructure and to take protective measures: Bradford, Citrus, Columbia, Duval, Hamilton, Hardee, Highlands, Marion, Nassau, Osceola, Suwannee, and Union Counties. And we are also providing today \$3 million from the Department of Labor for temporary jobs for workers to assist in the disaster recovery work so that we can complete it more quickly.

My experience has been that the efforts you see going on around you to just clean out the debris and help people look at a place as nearly as possible as it once was before the tornado is psychologically one of the most important things that can be done to help the healing process and to get people back to normal.

We'll also continue under FEMA's direction to provide the resources necessary to meeting the immediate disaster needs. Already FEMA staffers, the SBA, the Department of Labor, the Corps of Engineers, and some of our young AmeriCorps volunteers are here helping in the effort.

Let me say again a special work of commendation not only to the State and local emergency management officials and the search and rescue teams and the volunteers who have been working for 72 hours, but I'd also like to say a word of appreciation to Governor Chiles and to Lieutenant Governor MacKay with whom, unfortunately, I have had the opportunity to work now through more than one disaster. Florida has seen a lot of its natural disaster shares. I think you've used up your quota for the next 20 or 30 years in the last few years. But I've had an opportunity to see a caring team of

State leaders who work hard, work fast, and stay after us at the national level to do our part, and I want to thank them for that.

Let me also just say, for a moment, you may have seen in the news media that California, which has been beset by unusual amounts of raining and flooding because of El Niño, yesterday was badly hit by storms. People died there, and our thoughts are with their loved ones. I've asked Mr. Witt to go with me to California today so that he can go to the impacted area and see what is going on there.

Again, let me say that the thoughts and prayers of the American people are with you. In the Book of Isaiah in the Bible there is this chapter—I'd like to read it to you: "The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with you in stones. The sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars." We want to see you do that, brick by brick, home by home, street by street. You can do it, and we want to be there to help.

God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:56 a.m. at the Ponderosa Park Campground. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Lawton Chiles and Lt. Gov. Buddy MacKay of Florida; State Senators Charlie Bronson and Florida Senate Minority Leader Buddy Dyer; Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives Daniel Webster; Mayor Frank Atkinson of Kissimmee; Chuck Dunnick, chair, Osceola County Commissioners; and Maj. Gen. Ronald O. Harrison, adjutant general of Florida. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the Loan Guarantees to Israel Program**

*February 25, 1998*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

The attached report to the Congress on the Loan Guarantees to Israel Program was completed on December 31, 1997. Since then there have been several key, positive economic developments in Israel that I wanted to communicate to the Congress.

The Israeli Knesset passed its 1998 budget on January 5. The final budget adhered to

the deficit target of 2.4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) set by the Israeli Cabinet in August 1997, and established a spending target of 46.3 percent of GDP (down from 47.3 percent in 1997), without resorting to additional taxes. Furthermore, due partially to the mid-year spending cuts discussed in the report, the Government of Israel overperformed the 1997 deficit target of 2.8 percent of GDP by a significant margin; the 1997 budget deficit came in at 2.4 percent of GDP. These events demonstrate the commitment of the Israeli government to fiscal consolidation and reform.

Second, the Israeli consumer price index (CPI) for 1997 rose by only 7 percent, at the bottom of the 7–10 percent 1997 target range and a 28-year low. This indicates that the battle being waged by the Bank of Israel and the Israeli government against persistent inflation is succeeding. The Israeli Ministry of Finance is reportedly considering lowering the 1998 inflation target (currently set at 7–10 percent) in order to consolidate the strong inflation performance registered in 1997.

This information will be included in the 1998 report to the Congress on the Loan Guarantees to Israel Program.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
February 25, 1998.

**Remarks at a Democratic  
Congressional Campaign Committee  
Reception in San Francisco,  
California**

*February 25, 1998*

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, first for the warm welcome and second, and very importantly, for your support for these fine candidates for Congress.

I think I should begin by expressing my profound concern and support for all the people in California who have been suffering from the effects of El Niño. And tomorrow I'm going to Oakland to have a meeting with a lot of the folks about that. I also want to express my gratitude to the people of California and especially the people of San Francisco for the incredible support that Hillary

and I and the Vice President and Tipper and our administration have received.

When Nancy Pelosi almost drank my water—[laughter]—I thought to myself, she has carried so much water for me, she ought to drink some of it. The thing I find—I really admire Nancy Pelosi, and I like her a lot, even when she disagrees with me—but the thing I find remarkable—and I think this is important—is that after all these years in Washington, every time I talk to her about anything, if I didn't know, I would have thought she came yesterday because her passion, her energy, her intensity never fails. And believe me, even from this far distance, you've seen enough about how Washington works to know that anyone who can work there as long and as hard as she has and never become cynical and never lose their passion or their idealism is a truly remarkable public servant.

Senator Thompson, first, thank you for running. Thank you for running. And thank you for being willing to give up what must be an immensely rewarding career in the California State Senate, and certainly, almost certainly a more congenial lifestyle than the one you are about to embrace—[laughter]—for your willingness to be part of this great national adventure as our country goes through these profound changes into a new century and new millennium. Congratulations on getting your main opponent not to run. I never was very good at that myself—[laughter]—but I certainly am impressed.

And to my good friend Lois Capps, thank you for running. It took a lot of courage and a lot of depth and a lot of conviction. I was standing up here listening to Lois talk about the issues that I'm pushing in Washington in terms of the people who live in her district. That's another thing we need more of in Washington—we need a lot more concern about people and less concern about power. Power is the instrument through which you do things for people, but the power belongs to them. All of us, every single one of us, we're just hired hands for a fleeting period of time in the broad sweep of our Nation's odyssey. And apart from the love and affection I felt for Walter Capps, the enormous admiration that Hillary and I have for Lois, the love we have for Laura who now has the

longest leave of absence in history from the White House—[laughter]—I'd like to see her in Congress because she understands that politics is about people, and power is a temporary, limited instrument through which they can advance their dreams. Believe me we need more of that in Washington.

And I think she's going to win. She has a big fight, she's being out-spent, but she will never be out-worked. And there will be no one who will connect with people that they seek to represent, not a single person, as well as Lois Capps. And I'm thrilled at the prospect of her victory.

Let me just say very briefly, we know in America that our country is having good times. We see that even California, with all the troubles you had in the years of the late eighties and the nineties, has made an astonishing comeback which will not be deterred by the natural disasters that you seem to face on a regular basis here. [Laughter]

But what I want to say to you is, I come here grateful for the fact that we have the lowest unemployment in 24 years, the lowest crime rate in 24 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 27 years, the lowest inflation in 30 years, the highest homeownership in the history of the United States. But that imposes on us a special obligation, because we know, looking to the future, that the country and the world in which we will live both are changing very rapidly in ways that are quite profound, not all of which we can fully understand but many of which we do clearly know.

And at times like this, when it's easy to sort of relax, that's the last thing we ought to do. And the purpose of my State of the Union Address this year was to say, "Don't relax. Bear down. Look to the future. Let's be confident. Let's be happy." Yesterday the indexes of consumer confidence came out, the two main ones, and one of them was the highest in 30 years; the other one was the highest ever recorded. That confidence should not be grounds for complacency, it should be a spur to action.

And we have a lot to do. Yes, our economy is in good shape, but if we want to keep it there, we have to more broadly share the benefits of it. That's not only why I favor

raising the minimum wage but why I want to do more to bring the spark of enterprise and jobs to the neighborhoods in this country, principally in inner cities and in rural areas, which have not yet felt it. And that's a big part of our agenda.

We have an education agenda because we know that is the key to broadly shared prosperity and the key to America's future. I think 30 years from now, when people look back on the last 5 years, they may well say that even more important than balancing the budget was the work we did to open the doors of college education to all Americans, with the tax credits, the IRA's, the Pell grants, the work-study positions, all the things that have been done—the interest deductibility on student loans.

We can literally say for the first time in our country's history that if you're willing to work for it and somebody will take you, you can go. But now we know that while—the one reason we're so happy about it is that we really believe, and we're right, that America has the best system of higher education in the world. Indeed, our colleges and universities and graduate schools are filled with people from all over the globe because of that. No one believes we have the best system of elementary and secondary education in the world, but we know we can have, and that must be our next goal. That's why I want the smaller classes. That's why we want the smaller classes and the better-trained teachers and why we're working with the people from California to hook up every classroom in the country to the Internet by the year 2000.

We have to have a children's agenda. The crime rate has dropped dramatically in America for 5 years but not nearly so much among juveniles and only began to go down among juveniles a year or so ago. We now have the biggest group of young people in our schools in the history of the country. Finally, we've got a group, as of last year, bigger than the baby boom generation.

Now, that's good news for us in many ways, but it's troubling news unless we keep more of them out of trouble. We have to begin by helping more parents to succeed at home as well as at work. That's what this child care

initiative is all about, not only to provide millions of more people the chance to access child care but to make it better child care, with a stronger education component, and safer, so that parents can feel more secure and their children will do better.

That's also why I think it's very important that our initiative to provide more funds for schools to stay open and for community centers to stay open after school are important. You know, we've been filling our jails in this country for the last 15 years with younger and younger people. Most juvenile trouble starts when school lets out and ends when the parents get home at night. So if we would just spend a little money to help our schools and our community centers stay open after school until the parents get home so kids would have something to say yes to, we wouldn't have to worry about their tomorrows, and we could keep them out of trouble in the first place. And I hope very much—[*applause*].

Lois talked about our health care agenda. It is important; we're trying to insure 5 million more kids in this country. We've still got a lot of work to do on that, but the funds have been set aside. I want to let people between the ages of 55 and 65 buy into Medicare if they can afford it or their children can help them, because there are hundreds of thousands of people in this country who through no fault of their own have lost their health insurance. And if they buy in at the cost of the program, it will not do anything to undermine the stability of the Medicare program, which is now secure for more than a decade. I think it's important.

The Patient Bill of Rights is important because we've got 160 million now in managed care programs. And on balance, it's done a lot of things we like. The inflation rate in health care has finally come down, almost to the inflation rate of the economy generally. But people are still entitled to certain rights, which when you boil them all down, you take all the specifics—the right to have a specialist, the right to know what the options are for your care, the right to get emergency room care regardless if you need it—all those things, and the other things in the bill, when it comes right down to it, people have a right

to know that they're not sacrificing quality to save money. We have to maintain that.

We do have an environmental agenda and it has many parts. But the most important I would mention for this coming year are the new clean water initiative and our attempts to do America's part to meet the challenge of global climate change. Now, when you see the El Niño and you see that it's particularly severe this year, what it—it should give you a glimpse of what could happen if we permit the temperature of the globe to rise one or two or three degrees more than is absolutely necessary over the next few decades. And we can do this and grow our economy.

Every time we take on an environmental challenge, the naysayers say, "Oh, my goodness, it's going to bankrupt the economy." And every time we have raised our environmental sights and cleaned our environment and preserved the Earth for our children, it has generated untold numbers of new, high-tech jobs that actually diversified and strengthened the American economy because we were doing the right thing to try to preserve the Earth, the water, the air, and our natural resources for our children.

We have an agenda for the future. It begins with saying quite simply, as Nancy said earlier, that both Republicans and Democrats should resist the temptation to try now to spend the surplus we think we're going to have. We had 30 years of deficits. We'll almost—unless the Asian economic problems slow our economy so much that the next half of the year is different from what we think the first half will be, we'll probably have a balanced budget this year, if not, certainly next year. And we haven't had one since 1969. The last thing in the world we need to do is to start spending the surplus that hasn't materialized on tax cuts or on spending programs we would like.

The Social Security Trust Fund is all right until 2029; that's the year that basically all the baby boomers will be in. And when all the baby boomers get in, which is a troubling thought to me—[*laughter*—as I am the oldest of the baby boomers, we'll only have about two people working for every one person drawing Social Security if we continue to retire at present rates and if immigration continues at present rates and birth rates

continue at present rates. That's basically the estimate. Now, if we begin now, we can make modest changes that will secure that program as an important backstop for people's retirement.

Keep in mind, it's only been a little over a decade that the poverty rate among senior citizens has been lower than the overall poverty rate in the country. It was an astonishing achievement of the World War II generation, an astonishing achievement. And what we have to do now is to modernize that system so we can preserve it. We also have to say very few Americans can maintain their present lifestyle on Social Security alone, so we not only have to secure Social Security, we have to find more and better ways to get the American people also to save for their own retirement.

And finally, looking toward the future, I would just mention two other things. Hillary—with whom I talked right before I came here tonight, by the way—she said to me—she said, “You know, I will never love politics as much as you do, but I am actually jealous that you're going to be there tonight, and I'm not.” [Laughter] So that's a great compliment to the people of San Francisco.

I want to say two things. She came up with this idea that we ought, as a nation, to have gifts to the millennium this year and that there ought to be two parts to it: first, honoring our past, and second, imagining our future. So we have this project. The first thing we're trying to do is to save the relics of the country, and they actually need a lot of work—the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence—the documents themselves need some work to be saved, and the Star-Spangled Banner, which needs \$13 million to be preserved. And it would be a tragedy if we let it go. But in San Francisco, in every other community in this country, there are important parts of our national story that we hope every community will save.

And looking to the future, we have proposed the largest increase in research and development in the country's history, concentrated but not exclusively, in medical research, but with a doubling of the National Cancer Institute, a huge increase to the National Institutes of Health. This is important.

And the last thing we have to do for the future is to make sure that we have more crowds like this one that all get along. [Laughter] We have the most diverse democracy in human history. There are other countries that are equally diverse if you look at them from statistical points of view. India, for example, has even more diversity if you look at it from a statistical point of view. Russia has phenomenal diversity. But this is the only place where we actually all live together. [Laughter] I mean, physically, we all live in the same places, and we rub elbows, and we work in the same places, and we have this idea that no matter what our differences, we can, if we adhere to a certain set of values, get along together.

Nancy mentioned Jim Hormel. I have just one question, the only question the United States Senate should ask, and there is only one answer: Will he, or will he not, be a good Ambassador? And any member of either party that might be considering voting against him, I ask you to ask a second question: Have I ever voted for anybody I thought was less qualified? That is all we should ever ask. [Laughter]

And let me close with this point. I've spent a lot of time and been criticized in some quarters for trying to modernize the Democratic Party, for trying to break the old logjam of the eighties between the pro-Government and the anti-Government debate. We now have a smaller Government than we had when President Kennedy was in office, but it's very active and very progressive.

And we proved that you could grow the economy and have a social conscience, that you could be tough on crime but intelligent and humane as well; that if you reduced the welfare rolls, you had to give people education and child care and give them the chance to succeed at home as well as at work because that's what we want for everybody else.

And I say that to close with a word for the political party to which I proudly belong. Ideas are important, and it's very important to be modern and to be right, and you have to get it right. People can demean the importance of the economy, but when people don't have economic opportunity, it's hard to get them to think in broader terms about their

fellow men and women. But in the end, it is the core ideas and values that we believe and live by that really count.

Today, when I was in Florida touring the tornado damage, the last man I came to was sitting in a chair and he had his arm in a sling, and he stood up and saluted me. And he told his name, and he said, "Retired Master Sergeant U.S. Air Force, 21 years." And this man now lives alone. He spends half the year in Pennsylvania, where he works at a trailer park, and then comes down to Florida for the winter. He lives with his little dog; he has a dog—he and the dog. And he lost everything in the world he had in that tornado, including the bicycle with the basket that he took the little dog around in, except his little dog. But he's still got his country. And, thank God, we've still got him.

To me that's what politics is about. You think about all the people who came over here and started this country; they had a lot of problems by modern standards. You had to be a white male property owner to amount to much. Given my family's background, I probably couldn't have voted in the beginning. We probably wouldn't have had enough to own any property. But we had the right ideas.

The people who started this country said that power can only be good if it's limited and accountable. They came here fleeing the arbitrary exercise of absolute power. They said, "We have a different idea. We think freedom is good." Freedom for what? Freedom, first of all, to pursue happiness. Not a guarantee, but the freedom of the pursuit of happiness, along with the obligation to form a more perfect Union.

Now, if you think about freedom, the pursuit of happiness, and a more perfect Union, and then you think about every important period in this country's history, I think you would have to say that it always involved one or more of those three things. At every time of challenge and change we have been called upon to deepen the meaning of freedom, widen the circle of opportunity, and strengthen the bonds of our Union.

Now, in the 20th century, I don't believe anyone could say that the Democratic Party had not stood for those things. We may not have always been right, but we have always

been on the right side. And the reason I want these folks to succeed is that we have shed ourselves of the shackles of things people said were wrong—all the things they used to say about the Democrats: They can't manage the economy; they're weak on crime and welfare; they tax and spend; bad on foreign policy—all that stuff, you know. That's all just rhetoric now, yesterday's rhetoric.

Now, our challenge is to take this country into a new century in which we deepen the meaning of our freedom and extend to everybody who lives in this country, widen the circle of opportunity, and strengthen the bonds of our Union. I don't think you have a doubt—a doubt—about which party is more likely to fight for those things, day-in and day-out, year-in and year-out.

So I want you to try to help Lois Capps a little more before March 10th. *[Laughter]* I want you to see that Lois and Mike succeed in November. And I want you to remember that it's part of a great national enterprise. A lot is riding on it, and it is very much worth the effort.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. at the Fairmont Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to State Senator Mike Thompson, candidate for California's First Congressional District; Lois Capps, widow of the late Representative Walter H. Capps and candidate for California's 22d Congressional District, and her daughter, Laura; and James C. Hormel, nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Dinner in San Francisco**

*February 25, 1998*

Thank you. You know, that was a better speech than the one I was going to give. *[Laughter]* Thank you, Bill. Thank you, Sally. I am delighted to be here; it's a beautiful, beautiful place. It's been a great dinner, interesting people. Thank all of you for being here and supporting these fine candidates.

Thank you, Congressman Miller, and thank you, Nancy Pelosi, for being here and for your leadership. I told some people—we

were just at a larger reception over at the Fairmont, and I told the people there that the thing I really liked about Nancy Pelosi was she'd been in Washington a long time and she still had not managed to become cynical. She's still full of energy and passion and conviction. And we need more of that there.

I want to thank Mike and Lois for running for Congress. They are prepared to make a not insignificant sacrifice in the quality of their life to go there and serve you. And they will serve us well.

Thank you, Mr. Mayor, for coming here, and thank you for going on "Politically Incorrect" and sticking up for me tonight. *[Laughter]* It's truly strange that that would be politically incorrect to do, but that's all right. *[Laughter]*

I have a lot of friends here, but I want to say I'm especially glad to see Bill and Lee Perry. Bill Perry is one of the finest public servants that has served the United States in my lifetime, one of the greatest Secretaries of Defense we ever had, and I thank him for being here.

I'd also like to thank all of you in this room who have helped me and Hillary and Al and Tipper in our wonderful journey these last several years. And the people of California, and the people of this community, in particular, have been very, very good to us, and I'm profoundly grateful. And to those of you who've helped us, especially on the technology issues over the last 5 years, I thank you, too.

I was trying to think of what I ought to say tonight that you haven't already heard. One thing I thought, when Bill talked about what a meritocracy Silicon Valley was, and it didn't matter where you came from as long as you could program a computer—you know, you could become a partner. I thought, my God, if I had made my career there, I'd be starving now. *[Laughter]* Never has one so technologically challenged tried so hard to do so much for high technology in America.

Our country is in good shape tonight, and I'm very grateful for that. When you made that crack about how could you still be a Republican, I used to kid Bob Dole about every time the stock market would go up another 100 points, I'd say, "Here I am working to

get you more money for your campaign." *[Laughter]* It was against my self-interest, but I did it anyway. It was good for the country.

The country is in good shape. I hope that doesn't mean that we are feeling complacent or that we're going to take our eye off the ball and become more small minded when we ought to become more large minded and more visionary. And that's basically what I was trying to say in the State of the Union. And I feel—I'm glad that my fellow Democrats can go into this election cycle and say we proved that you could reduce the size of Government and balance the budget and still invest more in education and health care and the environment. We proved that you could have a partnership with business and still be compassionate toward working people. We proved that you could be for creating more jobs and still for giving people the support they need to succeed with their families at home, with child care and things like that. I'm glad we can say that. Or we can just reel the numbers off and say we've got the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, the lowest crime rate in 24 years, the lowest, smallest welfare rolls in 27 years, the lowest inflation in 30 years, the highest homeownership in history.

But all that means is that more people have good life stories to tell. And yet, if we think about the dynamism of this time, it's not true that the society is changing as fast or as profoundly as the Internet is growing, for example. But it's changing about as fast or as profoundly as a human organism can change. And therefore, we need to be thinking always about the future and what we're doing to prepare for this new century we're about to enter. And I'd just like to mention three or four things tonight that I think are terribly important.

First of all, it's important to keep the economy growing. It may be that technology with good economic conditions will permit a higher level of growth for a longer period of time at lower levels of inflation than previously we had thought. That may be true. It will only be true if we are responsible. And one of the things that to me has been most gratifying has been the public response to my insistence that we not start spending the surplus before



it materializes. We've had a deficit for 30 years, and you know, as soon as the new year came around everybody had great ideas for how to spend the projected surplus.

Now, I do believe we have eliminated the structural deficit, and I believe we'll get a balanced budget this year, if not this year, certainly next year. And then it's projected that we'll have surpluses for several years thereafter, more than a decade. And I hope that happens. And because there's no structural deficit in the budget—that is, even if the economy slows down, and you know, when the economy slows down, you get less tax money, and you have to put more out because there are more people unemployed—but over time, if there's no structural deficit, we'll still have a balanced budget to a large surplus, depending on how much we're growing.

There are a lot of people who want to start spending that right now in tax cuts or spending programs, and we should do neither. We certainly shouldn't do it (a) until it materializes—the bird is not in hand yet—and (b) we should not do it until we have dealt with the long-term financial problems with the Social Security system. We have some significant decisions to make. And I think it's very important.

Now, what my goal is, is to spend this year having a nonpartisan national process by which we discuss all the alternatives that are out there available, and then early next year we pass legislation which will basically take care of the long-term stability of the system. Simultaneously, no matter what option we choose, by 2029 when the present Trust Fund is expected to run out of money and start costing more money than the people are paying in every year in taxes, we will have to do some significant things. But no matter what we do, not now and not then will Social Security be enough for most Americans—the vast, vast majority of Americans—to maintain the standard of living they enjoy once they retire. Therefore, we also have to find ways for people to save more and to prepare more for their own retirement. So we're going to be looking at a lot of interesting ideas in the Social Security system. And I hope all of you will enter that debate.

But as I said in the State of the Union Address, it's literally true, there was a public opinion survey done last year which showed that most people under 25 thought it was more likely that they would see a UFO than that they would ever draw a penny of Social Security. I don't want to discourage young people from watching “The X-Files”—[laughter]—but I think we have to somehow reverse that perception. So that's the first thing I want to say.

And by the way, we have a simultaneous effort going on now with Medicare. We have more than a decade of life on the Medicare Trust Fund. But again, the pure demographics of the baby boom retirements and the fact that we're living longer and accessing more high-tech medicine mean that we're going to have to make some changes in Medicare if we expect it to sustain itself well into the next century.

It is well not to underestimate the good these programs have done. In 1985, for the first time in the history of our country, the poverty rate among people over 65 was lower than the poverty rate of people under 65. When Social Security was inaugurated, over 70 percent of the American people over 65 were living in poverty. Many of them were living in abject poverty. This is a terrific achievement for our country. And while I have emphasized putting more emphasis on the children in this country in poverty and more on their health care, their education, their nutrition, their well-being, we do not want to give up this signal achievement that is really a mark of a decent society. And yet, in order to avoid it we're going to have to plan for it and deal with the fact that my generation, the baby boomers—and I'm the oldest of them—when everybody from my age to 18 years younger crowds into the Social Security system, the Medicare system, all this is going to change everything substantially.

And we owe it—and I don't know anybody—and most of the people I grew up with are middle class people; more than half of them don't have college educations, the people I went to high school with. And I was with a bunch of them not very long ago, and we all sat around the table and every one of them is haunted by the idea that when

we retire we would have to impose an unwarranted financial burden on our children and on their ability to raise our grandchildren in order to take care of us. Nobody wants that. And we have an opportunity now, by acting now, to make relatively modest steps that will have relatively huge impacts in the years to come if we do it. So that's the first and very important thing I want to say.

The second point I'd like to make is that we have a lot of work to do in this country on education. And many of you have helped us in our goal of hooking up every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000. We're making good progress on that. But consider the anomaly in the United States—one of the things that I could just feel during the State of the Union resonating with people at home was when I went through all the things we'd done to increase aid to people who go on to college. Basically, now most Americans qualify for a \$1,500 tax credit, tax reduction for the first 2 years of college and a tax credit for junior and senior year and graduate school. And there are more Pell grant scholarships at higher income levels. There are education IRA's. You can deduct the interest on the student loan. The people that are in our direct loan program can get cheaper college loans with better repayment terms. There are 300,000 more work-study slots out there.

It's literally true today that if you're willing to work for it, you can go to college. And community college is virtually free now. For people who go to community colleges, that \$1,500 tax deduction covers all the tuition for about 80 percent of the community colleges in the country. And there's a great sense of achievement there. Why? Because people know it really means something to have higher education in America. And they know we have the best system of higher education in the world.

No one believes we have the best system of elementary and secondary education in the world. We just got the results of the Third International Math and Science Survey, which is given to several thousand—I think about 20,000—but a representative sample of our high school seniors. And of 21 countries we scored 19th. Now, in the eighth grade we're in the middle; in the fourth grade

we're near the top now; we tied for second in the fourth grade test.

What happens? There are lots of reasons for what happens. But we've been trying to unpack that. But I do not believe it is any longer acceptable to say, "Well, what do you expect, because we have so many poor kids. Twenty percent of our kids are in poverty, and we have so many minority kids," and all that. That is all a bunch of bull. This is not rocket science. I mean, Sally just introduced us to that magnificent young woman who's a student at Stanford. I believe all kids can learn. I believe 90 percent-plus of us can learn 100 percent of what we need to know to make a society go; otherwise democracies would all fail. And it would have happened long ago.

I have supported the charter school movement and school choice and a lot of other things. But we have got to have also more standards and more emphasis on teaching and a lot of other reforms in the schools. We've got a big program out there now to lower class sizes and do a number of other things in this session of Congress. But I intend to spend a huge amount of effort in the next 3 years to do what I spent the 20 years before I became President working on in public life, and that is trying to give us the best elementary and secondary system in the world. Because we're kidding ourselves if we think we can really build a truly meritocratic society if a bunch of people are stunted coming out of the blocks.

The next issue I'd like to mention that I think has great relevance to the future is the environment. This year the two major—I'm very proud of this—I didn't mention this before—but compared to 5 years ago, the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; there are fewer toxic waste dumps; and the food supply is safer. And we have set aside more land in trust to be saved than any administration in the history of the country, except the administrations of Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt. And I'm very proud of that. We're working on saving Lake Tahoe now, and I'm very proud of that.

But there is still a great deal to be done and on two issues in particular which will affect the quality of life in California. The first is with regard to clean water. The Clean

Water Act, which was passed 25 years ago, was designed to deal with pollution mostly coming out of sewage systems and out of industrial activities, so-called point source pollution. Bad stuff comes out of a pipe, goes in the water, clean it up. Forty percent of our waterways in America are still not pure enough to swim and fish in because of non-point pollution, things that run off from the land. We have got to do more on that. So we have a major initiative on that, a new clean water initiative.

The other thing that I think is imperative that we get on is—and you're dealing with it right now with El Niño—the climate change phenomenon is real, and we must do what we can to meet America's responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We can do that and still grow the economy. Every time we've had to face a clean air or clean water issue people have said, "Oh, if you do this it's going to shut the economy down." And every time we've done it, it has given the economy a boost because it's opened up a whole new area of high-tech jobs that we didn't have before.

Now basically, a third of all these CO<sub>2</sub> emissions come from transportation, a third come from buildings, homes, and office buildings, and a third come from manufacturing plants and electric generators. And the technology is now available, right now, to reduce substantially our greenhouse gas emissions, with available technology that pays out in 2 to 3 years, with regard to buildings, office buildings, homes, manufacturing facilities, and electric generators. And with the new fuel injection engines that are being developed for automobiles with the hybrid electric in fuel and gasoline engines and a lot of the other things that are going on, within 2 or 3 years you're going to look at automobiles that have literally one-fourth to one-fifth of greenhouse gas emissions of today's automobiles. This is an imperative thing to do, and I hope all of you will support this, because we have a good program going through Congress, and I think we'll pass it. But it's important.

The last thing I'd like to say is, Bill talked about research. Hillary gave me the idea of trying to have a part of our program this year be a gift to the millennium that would be

part respecting the past and part imagining the future. The respecting of the past part, we're going to try to restore the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, and the Star-Spangled Banner and get people in every community in the country to do an inventory of what they have.

For example, there's a place called the Old Soldiers Home in Washington, DC, that was built before the Civil War. And on the Old Soldiers Home there is a cabin which is almost totally dilapidated now, where Abraham Lincoln's family lived every summer—and other Presidents. It wouldn't cost that much to restore it. It's a Washington, DC, facility. Every single community in this country has places in it that tell the part of America's story, and they have to be preserved.

But we also have to recognize that in the years we were running these huge deficits, we wound up underinvesting in a lot of things we should have invested more in, principally research. So we've also offered the biggest research budget in the history of the country in this balanced budget. And I hope we can pass it, and I hope all of you will help us pass it because it's a big part of our future.

The last thing I'd like to say is this: I have tried very hard to change the political culture of Washington with, you would have to charitably say, mixed results. *[Laughter]* I don't even understand it half the time. I realize I'm afflicted by the fact that I had a real life for too long.

But I will say this: I think that the work we're doing in this race initiative, the campaign for the employment non-discrimination act, the efforts to bring America together across all the lines that divide us and to have everybody judged based on their merit, and to give everybody a chance, and to build an America that basically is a stunning contrast to the racial and ethnic and religious conflicts that are beleaguering the world—how much of your time as President—because my time is really yours—has been spent in my Presidency on the problems of my people in Northern Ireland, my people, still arguing over things that happened 600 years ago, or the continuing torment in the Middle East or what happened in Bosnia or trying to save all those children from the horrible fate they were facing in Rwanda and all these places.

We're supposed to be living in this great modern world, you can hook everybody up to an Internet, but if they still have primitive impulses then they just have modern technology to give greater vent with greater intensity to primitive impulses.

I want us to have a strong economy, and I want us to always be on the forefront of every new thing that happens. But in the end, we have to prove that we can be one nation together. And I try to end all my talks now by just reminding everybody that the people that came here to start this country came here because they literally deplored the unlimited, arbitrary, abusive exercise of power over the lives of citizens. And they had a better idea. They said, "We want to be free, and we want to be free to pursue happiness—not have it guaranteed to us, free to pursue it—and in the process, we will work to form a more perfect Union."

Now these people you're supporting here and the party we represent—yes, we've modernized the Democratic Party. Thank you, Bill. And yes, they can't say all those bad things about Democrats they used to say. But if you look at the whole 20th century, if you go right back to Woodrow Wilson forward, our country has always been for those things. We've always been for more freedom, more opportunity, and a stronger Union. Which means even when we haven't been right on the issues, we've been on the right side of America's history. And I'm proud to be here with you, Mike. I'm proud to be here with my good friend Lois. And I'm proud to be here with a party that I think can lead America to a better place in the new century.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to William and Sally Hembrecht, dinner hosts; Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr., of San Francisco; and William Perry, former Secretary of Defense, and his wife, Lee. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency Relating to Cuba and of the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Vessels**

*February 25, 1998*

On March 1, 1996, by Proclamation 6867, I declared a national emergency to address the disturbance or threatened disturbance of international relations caused by the February 24, 1996, destruction by the Government of Cuba of two unarmed U.S.-registered civilian aircraft in international airspace north of Cuba. In July 1995, the Government of Cuba demonstrated a ready and reckless use of force against U.S.-registered vessels that entered into Cuban territorial waters that resulted in damage and injury to persons on board. In July 1996, the Government of Cuba stated its intent to forcefully defend its sovereignty against any U.S.-registered vessels or aircraft that might enter Cuban territorial waters or airspace while involved in a memorial flotilla and peaceful protest. Since these events, the Government of Cuba has not demonstrated that it will refrain from the future use of reckless and excessive force against U.S. vessels or aircraft that may engage in memorial activities or peaceful protest north of Cuba. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing the national emergency with respect to Cuba and the emergency authority relating to the regulation of the anchorage and movement of vessels set out in Proclamation 6867.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
February 25, 1998.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:09 a.m., February 25, 1998]

NOTE: This notice was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 26 and was published in the *Federal Register* on February 26.

**Message to the Congress  
Transmitting a Notice on Cuba**  
*February 25, 1998*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared with respect to the Government of Cuba's destruction of two unarmed U.S.-registered civilian aircraft in international airspace north of Cuba on February 24, 1996, is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 1998, to the *Federal Register* for publication.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
February 25, 1998.

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 26.

**Message to the Congress  
Transmitting the Report of the  
Corporation for Public Broadcasting**  
*February 25, 1998*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

As required by section 19(3) of the Public Telecommunications Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-356), I transmit herewith the report of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
February 25, 1998.

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 26.

**Remarks to the Technology '98  
Conference in San Francisco**

*February 26, 1998*

Thank you very much. I also want to thank whoever turned the lights on. [Laughter] When Sandy and I first came out, you were all in the dark, and the lights were very bright. And I thought there was something rather anomalous about my coming to a high-tech conference and you being in the dark. [Laughter]

Actually, I had to fight with the Vice President to see who would get to come here today. Here's a guy who lives and breathes to talk about teraflops and gigabytes. But I pulled rank. [Laughter] And so here we are.

Thank you, Sandy, for your leadership and your kind remarks, and thank you for your friendship and your wise counsel. I'm very grateful.

I am delighted to be here. In many ways, I think my trip here today would be sort of like a President going to Pennsylvania in the 1890's to see the people who first struck oil, or transformed iron ore into steel, the people who built our great industrial-revolution America, for you have mined the myriad possibilities of the silicon chip, and likewise, have transformed America.

For those of us, like Congresswoman Pelosi and others who serve in the National Government, it's a very interesting challenge trying to assess where we are, where we're going, make the right decisions, and do it in a way that enables us to make the most of all this change while being true to our most fundamental values.

These are good times for America. Sandy talked about it. We are almost now up to 15 million new jobs in the last year and one month. We have the lowest unemployment in 24 years; the lowest crime rate in 24 years; the lowest welfare rolls in 26 years; the lowest inflation in 30 years; we're about to have our first balanced budget in 30 years; the highest homeownership in the history of America. These are good times.

The economic strategy that we have embraced to balance the budget but to invest more in our people and their future and to trade more around the world is working. But

I think everyone who has studied this economy believes that at the dawn of a new century the strength of our economy, the health and prosperity of our people, indeed, the very security of our Nation will depend more than ever on the scientific and technological revolution that so many of you have helped to set in motion.

Today, over 4 million Americans work in technology-related industries, earning 70 percent above average incomes. There are 70 new companies a week that start here in northern California alone in high-tech areas. There are new industries—biotechnology, super computers. But some of the most profound revolutions have occurred in old industries. Indeed, a great deal of information technology research and development is taking place in real estate, in services, in wholesale and retail trade, in construction, in transportation. The Ford Taurus that you drive today has more computer power than the Apollo 11 did that Neil Armstrong took to the Moon. It's an interesting time.

I came today to talk about what we can do to build on this progress by, in particular, promoting and expanding the fastest growing social and economic community in history, the Internet. Ten years ago, it was still the province of scientists, an obscure project developed by the Defense Department. Five years ago, the World Wide Web barely existed; I think there were about 50 sites. Today, there are 1.5 million new web pages created every day, 65,000 every hour. This phenomenon has absolutely staggering possibilities to democratize, to empower people all over the world. It could make it possible for every child with access to a computer to stretch a hand across a keyboard, to reach every book ever written, every painting ever painted, every symphony ever composed.

The next big step in our economic transformation, it seems to me, is the full development of this remarkable device and the electronic commerce it makes possible. One of the things I have focused on very much lately is with the unemployment rate at 4.7 percent and the inflation rate very low and stable, the question arises from all conventional economic analysis, can we continue to grow robustly without new inflation? The answer is, if we're productive enough and we have

enough technological advances, we probably can.

The second thing is, can we grow and finally extend the benefits of this explosion of enterprise to the isolated communities and people who have not yet felt this remarkable economic upsurge, the inner-city neighborhoods, the remote rural areas. I am convinced that the answer to both those questions can be yes, if, but only if, we maximize wisely the potential of our technological revolution.

A new study, soon to be released by our working group on electronic commerce, documents the remarkable growth of the Internet. Within a single year Amazon.com, an online bookstore, increased its sales nearly 10 times selling 6.5 million books in 1997. In a year's time, Internet airline ticket sales nearly tripled and is expected to grow sixfold, to \$5 billion a year, by the year 2000. By 2002, electronic commerce between businesses in the United States alone will exceed \$300 billion. And of course, as with everything on the Internet, that is just the beginning.

This explosion of real commerce has the potential to increase our prosperity, to create more jobs, to improve the lives of our people, and to reach into areas that have not yet felt prosperity. But it raises new and serious issues as well: How can we further its growth and foster its magnificent freedom without allowing it to be used as a tax haven that drains funds our States and cities need to educate our children and make our streets safe?

Thirty thousand separate taxing authorities in the United States—I'll say that again—there are 30,000 separate taxing authorities in the United States—all struggling to come to grips with this phenomenon, with only their existing old tax methods to apply to a very new world. There should be no special breaks for the Internet, but we can't allow unfair taxation to weight it down and stunt the development of the most promising new economic opportunity in decades.

I think America should adopt a moratorium on discriminatory taxation so that a bipartisan commission of elected officials, business leaders, consumers, and representatives of the Treasury Department can carefully

study the matter and come to a resolution. Therefore, I support the "Internet Tax Freedom Act" now before Congress, because it takes into account the rights of consumers, the needs of businesses, and the overall effect of taxation on the development of Internet commerce. The legislation does not prevent State and local governments from apply existing taxes to electronic commerce, as long as there is no discrimination between an Internet transaction and a traditional one. It does give us time to work through what is a very, very complex issue.

I'm committed to listening to the concerns of the Governors, the mayors, other officials and businesses, and to achieve a consensus that will establish rules that are pro-growth, nondiscriminatory, but will provide appropriate revenues our communities need to meet vital public purposes. I think this legislation will have the support of both parties. And I look forward to working with many of you to pass it and, along the way, to reach a greater consensus in our Nation about how to go forward from here.

To ensure that electronic commerce can flourish across international borders, I've also asked the Secretary of the Treasury to work with our international trading partners to block new or discriminatory taxes on global electronic commerce. Already, we've fought off a bit tax, a tax on every unit of data consumers download from the Internet. And we're working with the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development to prevent such discrimination and streamline tax administration in cyberspace.

There are other ways our Nation must work to harness the potential of the Internet. We want to work with you to meet our goal of connecting every classroom and library in America to the Internet by the year 2000. Just this morning in Washington, Vice President Gore announced that we have now connected nearly 80 percent of our schools to the Internet; more than twice as many as were connected in 1994 when we had the first NetDay here in California under the leadership of many of you in this room. He also announced new private and nonprofit efforts to connect underserved communities to 21st century technology, bringing us closer to ensuring that a child from the poorest

inner city, the most isolated rural area, or the most affluent suburbs all will have the same access to the same universe of knowledge in the same real time.

We want to work with you to make certain that cyberspace is a healthy place for our children in a way that does not overregulate the Internet or stifle the growth of electronic commerce. We will work with you to make sure that consumer protections and laws that promote competition remain strong in the new economy at the dawn of the new century, just as we built competition into the old economy at the turn of the last century.

We will work with you to make sure that the Internet never becomes a vehicle for tax evasion or money laundering. We will work with you to build a new Internet that operates up to a thousand times faster than it does today. My balanced budget includes \$110 million to develop the next generation Internet in partnership with leading U.S. high-tech companies and universities. Today, I'm pleased to announce new National Science Foundation grants that will connect 29 more universities to help create the next generation Internet, bringing the total now to 92. And we will work with you in every way we can to lift our eyes to the remarkable potential of the Internet for learning, for the arts, as a means to spread our shared values.

The First Lady and I launched the White House Millennium Program to help our Nation honor our past and imagine our future as we come to this new millennium. In the State of the Union Address I announced a public-private partnership to preserve our historic treasures for future generations and to help make them more accessible to more Americans, including the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, the Star-Spangled Banner. Putting our treasures on line will help us to do just that. Our balanced budget will make 3 million objects from the Smithsonian Institution, the National Archives, and other collections available on the Internet by the year 2000. And together with the private sector, we'll help museums and libraries and communities all around our country to do the same thing.

Two weeks ago, thanks to Sun Microsystems, we launched the first every

cybercast from the White House, when historian Bernard Bailyn from Harvard gave the first in a series of our Millennium Lectures. We started this special program to bring some of our greatest thinkers, writers, historians, and scientists to the White House to talk about our Nation's history and our future at this pivotal time. Next week, the world renowned physicist Stephen Hawking will be with us to talk about human knowledge in the 21st century and the innovations it will create. I hope you will join us on-line at [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov). [Laughter] We'll be there. And this time, we will have the capacity not to shut down like we did last time. [Laughter]

This is a truly exciting time to be an American. The qualities of the digital revolution, its dynamism, its curiosity, its flexibility, and its drive, they're at the core of our character and the legacy of our original revolution. By once again adding the fuel of interest to the fire of genius, as Abraham Lincoln once said, our country is leading the world to new heights of economic and human development.

I ask you to think about these things together. The economic development is largely the means by which we seek to expand the quality of human life, not only for the people who directly participate in it but for those who benefit indirectly.

As I think more and more about a new century and a new millennium, I also think more and more about how we began. All of you are here today committed to an incredible entrepreneurial way of life and work as the descendants of a group of people who came here believing that free people would nearly always get it right. They came fleeing societies where people like you, with good ideas in the 18th century, were subject to absolute, arbitrary, abusive government power. And they forged a Declaration of Independence, a Constitution, and a Bill of Rights based on the simple idea that freedom worked better and that people ought to be free to pursue happiness within the context of a more perfect Union.

If you look at the whole history of this country, that's what it has been about. You think about every single period of change and crisis, whether it was the Civil War or the

industrial revolution, the civil rights era, or the present information age, and the advances have come when we have deepened the meaning of freedom and expanded it to more people, widened the circle of opportunity and prosperity, and found a way across all of our myriad diversities to be a stronger, more united nation.

That is really what you are a part of, to a degree that would have been unimaginable to the people who founded this Nation. But I believe it would make them very, very proud.

Thank you for what you do and for what, together, we will do to make our country stronger in this new era. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. in the ballroom at the Ritz Carlton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Sandy Robertson, chairman, Robertson Stevens. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Disaster Assistance in Oakland, California**

*February 26, 1998*

**The President.** First let me thank all of you for being here and for meeting with me today. I'm very interested in this project. One of the things that I promised myself when I ran for President was that if I got elected I would give this country a first-rate disaster response operation through FEMA. When I was the Governor of my home State, Mayor Harris' other home State—[laughter]—and Mr. Witt was my State emergency services director, we had the highest frequency of tornados in the country. And we had some very serious flooding and a lot of other natural disaster problems. And it seemed to me that the United States Government owed it to the American people basically in a completely nonpolitical way to have the highest level of confidence, as well as common sense and humanity, in response to emergencies. And we have worked very hard to give that to the American people, and unfortunately, we've had more opportunities to practice in California than any other place in the country



because of all the difficulties that the people here have faced. But it's terribly important.

Yesterday I was in Florida dealing with the worst tornado there in 50 years and had, as you know, almost 40 people killed there. And we are very well aware of all the difficulties of El Niño here. But I just wanted to begin by saying I think this is an important part of our national obligation to one another, to deal with these things in the proper way.

Now, I want to talk a little bit about the project here, but first let me say that the people of California and now the people of Florida are giving the people of the United States some very painful examples of the excesses of this El Niño, which is apparently the strongest one in this century. We are doing what we can to help. Mr. Witt and I have been talking about this now ever since we were in Florida yesterday and flying up here.

Based on his recommendations, we're adding four more California counties to the disaster list: Los Angeles, Orange, Stanislaus, and Trinity. We're announcing that all 35 counties that are available for public assistance—and they will be eligible also, the ones on the disaster list, for individual assistance and for help with debris removal and other emergency proceedings.

The Federal Highway Administrator is here. We are releasing another \$20 million, in addition to the \$20 million announced last week by the Vice President, to help rebuild the road system. FEMA has already sent about \$5 million for disaster housing assistance. And SBA, HUD, and Labor are also providing support. But we are going to provide another \$1.5 million for emergency watershed funding from DOA to repair flood damage in Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties. So we're going to do the very best we can to help deal with these problems now.

The thing that I think is important as I have seen Californians deal with flooding, earthquakes, fires, hurricanes, you name it—I told somebody after the Northridge earthquake that California had been through so much I kept waiting for the pestilence to appear. [*Laughter*] But one of the things that I've been most impressed by is how quickly some visionaries in California have moved from dealing with the disasters to trying to prevent them and trying to accept the fact

that there is a high probability of natural hazards in this area but that with enough work they might be prevented, or at least some significant number of them might be prevented from becoming devastating disasters.

For every dollar we spend on prevention, we save two or more in future disaster cost. We know that. Therefore, the balanced budget plan that I presented contains \$50 million to launch this Project Impact to build disaster-resistant communities through partnerships with the private sector, volunteer groups, community organizations. FEMA has already launched seven of these pilot projects and we will have a Project Impact community in every State by this fall. So I think that's very good news.

I'm glad Harris Wofford is here. Our AmeriCorps volunteers are going to be joining our efforts by the spring break initiative, coordinating disaster reduction efforts in communities of Project Impact. And in Oakland, the collaborative agencies for responding to disasters is joining the Corporation for National Service and FEMA to mobilize hundreds of high school students to carry out preventive measures in over 500 low-income and elderly housing complexes. That's very, very good news.

It seems to me that Project Impact can become a real model for every community in the country. And it's an example of my idea of the proper role of Government as partner, as catalyst—is giving people the tools to deal with their own challenges and make the most of their own lives.

In Seattle, the business community has matched a million dollars that we put into Project Impact with \$6 million in private money. And they're undertaking a really very impressive comprehensive effort. We'll have 50 Project Impact communities, and we need 500 business partners by the end of this year. I hope we will get them. I think we will.

Let me say I look forward to the discussion today. I want to hear from you. I want to get the best ideas I can about what else we can do. We want common sense, innovative opportunities to help people deal with profoundly human challenges.

Mr. Witt, you might want to give us a little update on where we are in southern California, and then we'll just go around the table. I'd like to hear from everybody here.

*[At this point, the roundtable discussion began.]*

**The President.** One of the things that I hope will happen is that Project Impact and all the communities where it operates will be able to get a higher percentage of people who are willing to basically continue to be prepared, continue to train, and then continue to do things like you just talked about on the gardening on a systematic basis.

Interestingly enough, this is a problem that is common to all human affairs. If you think about the last time something bad happened to you in some way, the longer ago it was the less likely you are to worry about it anymore. It's just human nature in all human affairs. And one of the big challenges we have in maintaining the readiness of our military forces is the fact that since the cold war the perception is that, well, there are all these things we don't have to worry about.

And then you say, "Well, why don't you have to worry about it?" Well, because you have this military force. But if all of a sudden you forget it, and you act like you don't have to worry about it, then one day you don't have it anymore.

So this is a common problem in all human affairs. And one of the things that I was so excited about this thing was that maybe we could actually get a high density of people, real citizens in every community in all these various walks of life we've been hearing about here, who will at least maximize the chance that people will be ready the next time something bad happens, and that they will have done as many things as you could possibly do to minimize the damage of whatever it is that occurs.

That's all you can do in human life. The rest of it's up to the good Lord. That's something we just—there aren't any guarantees. But I think it's very important what you're saying, and I just hope that this project will get more people either like you or to listen to you.

*[At this point, the roundtable discussion continued.]*

**The President.** One of the things I was going to suggest—and it may be a hair-brained idea; wouldn't be the first one I had—but the position you're in with this mudslide business, it's not as if you deliberately ignored a clear and present danger. For example, the last time we had a big flood at home in the 1990's, we had all these little towns just flooded out along the Arkansas River. Now, there were some people who had built in the 100-year flood plain and some people who built below that that basically, reasonably should have known that every 25 years that was going to wipe out. I don't think we had 300-year floods in about 10 years, so I guess we can wait 300 years before we have another one. *[Laughter]*

But anyway, it's not that sort of situation. It's just a question of—what happens if you have a vulnerable ecostructure, as you do in California, and you have a lot of people that have to live somewhere, there always may be kind of unforeseen circumstances. And one of the things that I was interested in was whether you might be able to devise some partnerships with insurance companies where you get all the people involved in litigation, all the people involved in all this and then you say, okay, give me the laundry list of things everybody in this neighborhood has to do, but if they do it, then you can get kind of a blanket insurance policy. Even if it's got a fairly sizable deductible, it would protect you against what you're worried about now.

And I think that in a place like California where—see, all these things relate to one another. For example, if you have an earthquake that doesn't damage your home profoundly, but loosens the foundation a little bit, then you're more vulnerable to a mudslide that may come along 6 years later. I mean, all these things reinforce one another. And so if there could be some way that, growing out of this Project Impact, there could be some more comprehensive look at insurance plus prevention plus mitigation plus all these things going together, I think it might bring a lot of peace of mind to all those people on your block now, for example, that are worried to death they're going to have a study and the study's going to say, come up with 3 times your annual income if you want to

save your house. That's like saying if I were 25, I could jump higher. [*Laughter*] It's nice to know, but you've got a pretty good idea before you do the study.

Let's talk a little more about mitigation, though. I know a lot of you have been involved in this.

[*At this point, the roundtable discussion continued.*]

**The President.** Well, let me say this. One of the things I would like to ask you all to think about this, and I want to call on our host mayor here in a minute. One of the things that I would like to see come out of this—keep in mind, I have asked for a substantial amount of money but spread across the Nation the \$2 million is not a great deal of money—what we want to do is help get as many of these projects put together as possible. And if they work then you can, coming up out of this project here and in other places like it, kind of give us a sense and provide evidence that if we shifted some of our spending programs priority—whether it's in housing or highways or whatever—to do more prevention, this is something that would not only meet with widespread public support but actually that the money would be well spent because you've actually gone through a grassroots planning process and, you know, kind of what needs to be done; you've identified the things and you can guarantee that we will get that two-to-one return we were talking about.

So I hope you'll all be thinking about this. As you go along, you do all this work you're going to do anyway just think about—just for example on this whole business of vegetation. You know, in addition to planting gardens there are plenty of places that, if they were more properly vined, you'd have all kinds of other stuff going: You would reduce soil erosion; you would reduce the impact of a flood. Now, if the flood is big enough, it will wash anything away, but we're talking about within range.

All these things there are possibilities for should this be part of the conservation reserve program, for example, the agriculture program, all these kind of things. There's a gazillion options we could have here that will

present themselves to us as you work through this.

[*At this point, the roundtable discussion continued.*]

**The President.** This has been very interesting to me, and it's a wonderful reaffirmation of the citizenship of all of you, not only our AmeriCorps people, but all this is really ultimately about citizen service. I thank you very much. And we'll try to do our part, get this going, and get it going across the country. Thank you. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:24 p.m. in the auditorium at the Scottish Rite Community Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Elihu Mason Harris of Oakland. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Statement on Campaign Finance Reform Legislation

February 26, 1998

I am disappointed that the Senate Republican leadership today killed campaign finance reform. Given a chance to strengthen our democracy, an obstructionist minority instead chose to preserve the system of soft money and unlimited backdoor campaign expenditures.

I am pleased that all 45 Democrats and a majority of the Senate supported the bipartisan McCain-Feingold legislation. I will support their attempts to bring this legislation up for a vote again this session. Just as the need for change has not gone away, campaign finance reform will not go away.

In the meantime, I will redouble my efforts to push campaign finance reform through other means. I ask the members of the Federal Election Commission to take the step supported by a majority of Members of the Senate and ban soft money. And I continue to call upon the Federal Communications Commission to act to provide free or discounted airtime to candidates, and I will strongly oppose any efforts by Congress to block this reform. I believe these petitions offer us the most realistic hope for real reform this year.

## **Statement on Proposed Child Care Legislation**

*February 26, 1998*

Last month I unveiled my child care initiative to make child care better, safer, and more affordable. Today I am pleased that Congresswoman Kennelly has introduced comprehensive child care legislation that is also designed to meet the needs of America's children and families. Congresswoman Kennelly's bill is a strong package that, like mine, significantly increases child care subsidies for poor children, provides greater tax relief to help low- and middle-income families pay for child care, creates a tax credit for businesses that provide child care for their employees, increases after-school opportunities for children, promotes early learning, and improves child care quality.

This proposal is a testament to Congresswoman Kennelly's leadership on this issue and her commitment to the future of our Nation's children. I look forward to working with her and other Members of Congress to enact bipartisan child care legislation that helps Americans fulfill their responsibilities as workers, and even more important, as parents.

## **Memorandum on Certification for Major Illicit Drug Producing and Drug Transit Countries**

*February 26, 1998*

Presidential Determination No. 98-15

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* Certification for Major Illicit Drug Producing and Drug Transit Countries

By virtue of the authority vested in me by section 490(b)(1)(A) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, ("the Act"), I hereby determine and certify that the following major illicit drug producing and/or major illicit drug transit countries/dependent territories have cooperated fully with the United States, or have taken adequate steps on their own, to achieve full compliance with the goals and objectives of the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in

Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances:

Aruba, The Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Laos, Malaysia, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Taiwan, Thailand, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

By virtue of the authority vested in me by section 490(b)(1)(B) of the Act, I hereby determine that it is in the vital national interests of the United States to certify the following major illicit drug producing and/or major illicit drug transit countries:

Cambodia, Colombia, Pakistan, and Paraguay.

Analysis of the relevant U.S. vital national interests, as required under section 490(b)(3) of the Act, is attached.

I have determined that the following major illicit drug producing and/or major illicit drug transit countries do not meet the standards set forth in section 490(b) for certification:

Afghanistan, Burma, Iran, and Nigeria.

In making these determinations, I have considered the factors set forth in section 490 of the Act, based on the information contained in the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report of 1998. Given that the performance of each of these countries/dependent territories has differed, I have attached an explanatory statement for each of the countries/dependent territories subject to this determination.

You are hereby authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress immediately and to publish it in the *Federal Register*.

**William J. Clinton**

## **Proclamation 7068—Save Your Vision Week, 1998**

*February 26, 1998*

*By the President of the United States of America*

### **A Proclamation**

The ability to see is a great treasure; but, as with any precious possession, it is vulnerable to loss—through injury, age, or disease. Men and women whose jobs require them

to work with chemicals or machinery are at increased risk of eye injury. Macular degeneration takes a dramatic toll on the vision of people aged 60 and over, causing severe visual impairment and even blindness in its victims. Diseases such as glaucoma, cataract, and diabetic retinopathy can silently steal the vision of their victims without pain or other early symptoms to signal the need for immediate medical attention.

The greatest defense we have in protecting our eyesight is early detection and treatment. While many Americans receive regular physical examinations to ensure their overall fitness, they often ignore the health of their eyes. Yet, by the time many patients realize their eyesight is deteriorating, it is often too late to restore vision already lost. Even though they may not be experiencing vision problems, Americans should make a dilated eye examination part of their preventive health care routine. A dilated eye exam can reveal early signs of eye disease and make it possible to treat the affliction and preserve vision.

Good eye care is not solely for those who know they are at high risk for eye disease—it is for everyone. Certain types of eye disease tend to develop primarily in children, while others manifest themselves most often in working-age adults or older men and women. By taking good care of our eyes, we can take the important steps to maintain our quality of life and ensure the full enjoyment of all that our world has to offer.

To remind Americans of the importance of protecting their eyesight, the Congress, by joint resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 629; 36 U.S.C. 169a), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the first week in March of each year as "Save Your Vision Week."

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 1 through March 7, 1998, as Save Your Vision Week. I urge all Americans to participate by making eye care and eye safety an important part of their lives and to ensure that dilated eye examinations are included in their regular health maintenance programs. I invite eye care professionals, the media, and all public and private organizations dedicated to preserving

eyesight to join in activities that will raise awareness of the measures we can take to protect and sustain our vision.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 2, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 3.

### **Statement Announcing Grants Under the Violence Against Women Program**

*February 27, 1998*

Today, the Justice Department is awarding more than \$135 million in grants under the Violence Against Women program to help State and local authorities combat domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault. This money will be used to train police, hire prosecutors and provide assistance to victims. Since I signed the Crime Act in 1994, we have begun to transform the way law enforcement deals with domestic violence. We should be proud of the efforts underway in communities across our Nation to stop these serious crimes. These funds will help every State build and expand on the programs they have developed to ensure that abusers are captured, prosecuted, and punished.

### **Letter to the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission on Campaign Finance Reform**

*February 27, 1998*

*Dear Chairman Kennard:*

Yesterday's defeat of comprehensive campaign finance reform legislation in the Senate makes it even more imperative that the Federal Communications Commission act to provide free and reduced rate airtime to candidates and take any other steps that would

reform political debate over the public airwaves.

I applaud your previous decision to take the next steps toward providing such free and reduced rate time. The issues surrounding such a proposal are complex; there are a variety of ways to proceed, and the views of all interested parties should be considered. But I continue to believe that providing such airtime is the critical next step to strengthen our democracy, improve our political system, and give voters the loudest voice.

I strongly oppose any effort in the Congress to block your ability to take the next important steps for reform. Yesterday's defeat means that it will be virtually impossible for the Congress to move forward on campaign finance reform. The Congress should not make matters worse by actively blocking your progress.

The most realistic next steps for reform will come from the actions of regulatory agencies, acting within their legal authority, to renew our democracy. I thank you for your leadership and pledge to work with you as you move forward.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

**Letter to Members of the Federal Election Commission on Campaign Finance Reform**

*February 27, 1998*

*To the Members of the Federal Election Commission:*

Yesterday's defeat of comprehensive campaign finance reform legislation in the Senate makes it even more imperative that the Federal Election Commission (FEC) act to end the soft money system.

On June 4, 1997, I petitioned the FEC to act within its current statutory authority to end the soft money system. Your General Counsel, Lawrence Noble, has concluded that the FEC does, in fact, have the legal authority to act. This would be a major breakthrough for reform. I understand you have asked the General Counsel to explore other options—but the inability of the Congress to act on this vital public matter underscores

how urgent it is that the FEC proceed without delay.

The rules governing soft money are principally the legacy of decades of decisions by the FEC. You have it in your power to act now to end this system. If no action is taken, then in coming years the fundraising arms race that has consumed both parties will only worsen.

The Senate's failure to pass campaign finance reform legislation means the most realistic next steps for reform will come from the actions of regulatory agencies, acting within their legal authority, to renew our democracy. I thank the FEC for the steps it has taken thus far and urge you to press forward to end the soft money system.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

**Proclamation 7069—American Red Cross Month, 1998**

*February 27, 1998*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

Americans share a long tradition of compassion for others and lending aid to those in need. Since our earliest days as a Nation, we have been able to bear the heartbreak of family tragedy, personal hardship, or natural disaster because of the help of caring friends and neighbors. For 117 years, the American Red Cross has been the staunchest of friends and neighbors to millions of people both here at home and around the world, adding its own vital contributions to our history of service.

The American Red Cross brings both comfort and practical assistance to the victims of more than 65,000 disasters each year, from hurricanes and tornadoes affecting thousands of people to a house fire involving a single family. Members of the Red Cross also work on the front lines of armed conflicts and disasters across the globe to relieve suffering

and restore human dignity and self-sufficiency. At the same time, they serve alongside our men and women in uniform wherever they are deployed, relaying urgent family messages and providing a precious link with home. And through its Holocaust and War Victims Tracing and Information Center, the Red Cross has helped thousands of families in their search for information about the fate of loved ones from whom they were separated during the Holocaust.

Few of us have remained untouched by the work of the Red Cross. The Red Cross collects, tests, and distributes six million units of donated blood each year, nearly half the Nation's supply. More than 1,300 Red Cross chapters in communities across America teach health and safety courses to 12 million people each year, providing them with knowledge regarding CPR, first aid, water safety, and HIV/AIDS that can—and does—save lives.

The Red Cross has become a simple yet powerful symbol that transcends language and conveys a universally understood message of hope. This symbol draws its strength from the dedication of the more than 1.3 million volunteers who help disaster victims, assist at blood drives, teach health classes, and respond to urgent community needs. I commend the generous spirit of all those who carry out the important work of the American Red Cross, and I encourage all Americans to support their efforts—whether by giving blood, donating funds to help disaster victims, or becoming Red Cross volunteers themselves. In doing so, we will ensure that the American Red Cross will continue its tradition of compassionate service in the 21st century and beyond.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America and Honorary Chairman of the American Red Cross, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 1998 as American Red Cross Month. I urge all the people of the United States to support Red Cross chapters nationwide, and I challenge each of you to become active participants in advancing the noble mission of the Red Cross.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:34 a.m., March 2, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 3.

### **Proclamation 7070—Irish-American Heritage Month, 1998**

*February 27, 1998*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

As it has been for many immigrants, America has always been a beacon of hope for the Irish people, a land of promise beckoning on the far shore of the Atlantic where they could build a better life for themselves and their children. Those who traveled here in the 17th and 18th centuries came primarily to escape religious, social, and political discrimination in their homeland. But millions of Irish immigrants who came to the United States in the 19th century were fleeing not only persecution, but also the specter of starvation and disease brought on by the Great Hunger, the devastating potato famine that began in the 1840s. Many of them did not survive the journey; many of those who did arrive at America's ports were hungry, ill, and crushingly poor.

But the Irish did not come to America empty-handed. They brought with them strong arms and an even stronger spirit that would help to build our Nation's great canals, bridges, and railroads. They would wrest coal from the mines of Pennsylvania and raise the skyscrapers of New York. They brought with them a love of words that enriched American journalism and literature and produced writers such as John Boyle O'Reilly, Ring Lardner, Eugene O'Neill, and Mary McCarthy. They brought as well a great reverence for education and created schools, colleges, and

universities across the country renowned for their scholarship and social conscience.

Perhaps their greatest gifts to America have been a abiding love of liberty, and an patriotic spirit. Irish Americans have served with distinction in every American conflict, from the Revolutionary War to the Persian Gulf, and their keen sense of social justice made them among the first and most effective voices for labor reform. From Mary Kenney O'Sullivan to George Meany, they have been in the vanguard of efforts to improve working conditions and wages for all Americans. Generations of Irish Americans entered public service to reach out to those in need—to feed the poor, find jobs for the unemployed, fight for racial equality, and champion social reform. From the Kennedys of Massachusetts to the Daleys of Chicago, from Governor Al Smith to Ambassador Mike Mansfield, Americans of Irish descent have made important and enduring contributions to the public life of our Nation.

The United States continues to draw strength and vision from our multicultural, multiracial society. This month, when citizens across the country celebrate Saint Patrick's Day, we remember with special gratitude the gifts of Irish Americans: faith in God, love of family and community, and an unswerving commitment to freedom and justice that continues to enrich our Nation and fulfill the promise envisioned by the first Irish immigrants who turned their eyes and hearts toward America so many years ago.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 1998 as Irish-American Heritage Month. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:34 a.m., March 2, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 3.

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## Digest of Other White House Announcements

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The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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### February 21

In the afternoon, the President met with his foreign policy team to discuss the situation in Iraq. In the evening, he and Hillary Clinton attended an NBA basketball game at the MCI Center.

### February 23

The President announced that Federal disaster aid was made available to the victims of tornadoes in central Florida. In addition, Federal aid was made available for families and businesses in 11 central Florida counties struck by earlier storms.

### February 24

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael J. Copps to be Assistant Secretary for Trade Development at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to nominate Deidre A. Lee to serve as Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy at the Office of Management and Budget.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ruth Y. Goldway to serve as Commissioner on the Postal Rate Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate William C. Apgar to be Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sue Bailey to be Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs at the Department of Defense.



The President announced his intention to appoint Warren B. Rudman as Chair of the Special Oversight Board for Department of Defense Investigations of Gulf War Chemical and Biological Incidents.

### **February 25**

In the morning, the President traveled to Kissimmee, FL, and in the afternoon, he traveled to San Francisco, CA.

### **February 26**

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Oakland, CA. Later, he traveled to Salt Lake City, UT.

The President announced his intention to nominate Q. Todd Dickinson to be Deputy Assistant Secretary and Deputy Commissioner of the Patent and Trademark Office at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced that four additional California counties, hard hit by torrential rain, are eligible for Federal disaster assistance.

### **February 27**

The President announced his intention to appoint Michael Lewan as member and Chair and Edgar Gluck as a member of the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad.

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## **Nominations Submitted to the Senate**

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The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

### **Submitted February 23**

Raymond L. Bramucci,  
of New Jersey, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor, vice Timothy M. Barnicle, resigned.

Seth D. Harris,  
of New York, to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, vice Maria Echaveste, resigned.

Patrick A. Mulloy,  
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce, vice Charles F. Meissner.

### **Withdrawn February 23**

John Warren McGarry,  
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2001, which was sent to the Senate on January 7, 1997.

### **Submitted February 24**

Melvin R. Wright,  
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Henry Harold Kennedy, Jr., elevated.

### **Submitted February 25**

William C. Apgar, Jr.,  
of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, vice Michael A. Stegman, resigned.

Sue Bailey,  
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, vice Stephen C. Joseph, resigned.

Michael J. Copps,  
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce, vice Raymond E. Vickery, Jr., resigned.

Ruth Y. Goldway,  
of California, to be a Commissioner of the Postal Rate Commission for a term expiring November 22, 2002, vice Edward J. Quick, Jr., term expired.

Deidre A. Lee,  
of Oklahoma, to be Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy, vice Steven Kelman, resigned.

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## **Checklist of White House Press Releases**

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The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as

items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

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***Released February 20***

Transcript of a press briefing by Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala and Surgeon General David Satcher on racial and ethnic disparities in health care <sup>1</sup>

***Released February 21***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry and National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the situation in Iraq

Announcement of the President's letter to Senators on campaign finance reform legislation

***Released February 23***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai of Thailand

Statement by the Press Secretary: Walter Mondale To Visit Indonesia

***Released February 24***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

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<sup>1</sup> This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue. This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 20 but was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m., February 21.

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling and Council of Economic Advisers Chair Janet Yellen on the national economy and the Federal budget

Statement by the Press Secretary: Presidential Delegation to the Inauguration of the President of the Republic of Korea

Announcement of nomination for the Superior Court of the District of Columbia

***Released February 26***

Statement by the Press Secretary: Surrender of Bosnia War Criminal

Statement by the Press Secretary: 1998 Presidential Certifications for Major Narcotics Producing and Transit Countries

Fact sheet: Overview of 1998 Presidential Certification for Major Drug Producing and Transit Countries

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**Acts Approved  
by the President**

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***Passed February 25, over the President's veto***

H.R. 2631 / Public Law 105-159

Disapproving the cancellations transmitted by the President on October 6, 1997, regarding Public Law 105-45